



WORLD WATCH ONE

March 2019



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WORLD WATCH ONE ☺ IN THIS ISSUE

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Front Cover: This issue's cover illustration by Mark Texeira, Buckaroo Banzai's first comic book artist. Buckaroo's glasses colored by Sage Mattsson, freshman at the Laguna College of Art and Design. #GoLizards!

Questions? Comments? Having trouble with a localized extradimensional incursion? The deuce you say! Contact us at dan.berger.2@gmail.com.

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WORLD WATCH ONE

NEWSLETTER OF TEAM BANZAI

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Setting the Table

Ok, we know. The last issue of *World Watch One* exited the Chicago Bureau offices and snuggled up to your digital devices a mere six months ago. In the long history of the newsletter, issues almost never come out this close together. Don't worry; you are not experiencing a dimensional disruption in the fabric of the cosmos. Actually, let me rephrase that: if you are experiencing a dimensional disruption in the fabric of the cosmos 1) we're really sorry for the day you're having, 2) the Institute is working on it, and 3) this newsletter is not a manifestation of that phenomenon. Probably.

What you are experiencing is a renewed sense of purpose and an expansion of the newsletter's staff. Last year proved to be a particularly good one for newsletter articles and additional helping hands, such that we were able to reserve a few articles for this issue. 2019 has proved fruitful as well. A good thing too, because we fully intend to publish a supersized 35th anniversary issue this summer in addition to this March issue.

That's right, *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension* turns thirty-five this year, and the feeling here at the Chicago Bureau office is that this may prove to be the best anniversary year yet.

Let's not get too far ahead of ourselves, though. This issue in many ways is a table-setter for our August issue as well as a house cleaning of articles in our development queue. The result is an exploration of some of the less thoroughly investigated byways of Banzailandia—not quite on the part of the map marked "here be dragons," but getting there. Of particular note are several comic book art projects and references inspired by the film, including a brief encounter with the artist on Buckaroo's Marvel Comics adaptation, Mark Texeria. Mark's sketch of Dr. Banzai appears on this issue's cover.

Comics artists and comics topics in particular receive wide ranging coverage as we explore everything from artist Michael Wm. Kaluta's original cover for "the latest issue" as it appears in the film to several unpublished original pages from the Marvel adaptation of the film. Comics also figure prominently in our examination of the Banzai franchise's development after the docudrama's box office misfortunes. The ever-elusive Buckaroo Banzai soundtrack also receives some more attention this issue in the wake of a recently discovered isolated film score ripped from an unlikely source.

So, time to pull out the decorations and book the banquet hall. It's an anniversary year. Let's get this party started!

--DB

Acknowledgements: Special thanks go to Mark Texeria and Michael Wm. Kaluta for being the primary victims of the interview hot seat in this issue. Thanks also to Denise and Mike Okuda at the Banzai Institute Facebook page for their generous assistance not only to World Watch One, but to Banzai fandom in general. We extend our appreciation to Dan Berger, Matt Haley, and Mike Okuda for creating the graphic elements that appear in this issue, as well as DeWayne Todd for his Lectroidcentric artistic contributions. Many thanks to our contributors: Dan Berger, Steve Mattsson, Sean Murphy, Scott Tate, and DeWayne Todd. Thanks also go out to Chris "ArcLight" Wike for hosting the newsletter's presence on the interwebs at the [World Watch OnLine library](#) and Sean Murphy for doing the same at the [Bucakroo Banzai FAQ](#). Special thanks to Sage Mattsson for her assistance with this issue's front cover.

Get in the game: As we have said in the past, issues of World Watch One do not write or illustrate themselves. Consider this your invitation to contribute to the next issue. All you need to do is send us something by July 1, 2019. It could be anything: a tribute, an article, a sketch, a remembrance of the first time you saw the docudrama, or how the film touched your life in an unexpected way. Don't worry about making it perfect. We'd just love to hear from you. See below for contact information and further encouragement.

This issue's Blue Blaze Irregulars of the month awards go to Sean Murphy for tackling two long form articles and DeWayne Todd for putting in some serious overtime on the newsletter during a busy time in his life. Honorable mention goes to Scott Tate for making my life easier with his fast work.

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Submissions to World Watch One are strongly encouraged. Really. I am dead serious. People, we know you're out there! All are welcome. Please contact us at dan.berger.2@gmail.com for details.

How Will You Celebrate the 35th?

By DeWayne "BuckarooTrooper" Todd

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai had its official movie release on August 10th, 1984*. Can you imagine what it must have been like then? For some of us, we can remember. But for others, it is a pre-existent shadow of days gone by.

Whether you were there at the beginning, or were introduced to the complex docudrama elucidation of Buckaroo Banzai in the intervening years, 2019 will mark the 35th anniversary of the movie release. This is a time of recognition and celebration!

The traditional gift for a 35th anniversary is coral. It might be appropriate for readers to pause and consider the intricate designs for the Black Lectroid vessels that were based upon coral growth patterns. It is as if the designers were giving a 35th anniversary gift to the audience in the form of these amazing ship designs.

Here are a few other ways that you might celebrate the release of the original *Buckaroo Banzai* docudrama:

- ❑ **Organize a Viewing:** Reach out to your local theater or library to inquire about organizing a local showing of the movie or host a viewing party for *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* at your home. Invite attendees to bring their favorite Buckaroo Banzai collectibles to share with the group. Don't forget to hang some "35th Anniversary signs" and decorate in the color coral! Refreshments could include watermelon, grapefruit, and Twinkies.
- ❑ **Convention Event:** Identify some conventions to attend that might be willing to host a showing of the movie, schedule a panel discussion or even organize a dance party for the anniversary. If it is a dance party, be sure to include lots of eighties tunes and the Buckaroo Banzai March!
- ❑ **Bake a Cake:** Every party needs a cake and the 35th anniversary is no exception. Options might include a "35th Anniversary" cake or a screen-printed cake with a picture of Buckaroo on the top. You could try something more complex like converting a pick-up truck cake mold into a jet car cake! Be sure to package your confectionary in a Big Pink Cake Box.
- ❑ **Anniversary Cards:** Make a list of all the people you know (and some you don't know) who might get a kick out of receiving a "Happy 35th Anniversary" greeting card. Then pick up some cards from the store (or make your own) and mail them to all your friends with a special message from Buckaroo!
- ❑ **The More You Read:** Organize a dramatic reading of the novelization of *Buckaroo Banzai* by Earl Mac Rauch. Recruit

THE ARTIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS... JOHN PRINCE.

**TONIGHT WE'RE GONNA
PARTY LIKE IT'S
NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR!!!**

other fans to bring food and drinks and join in the dramatic reading as each person takes turns reading paragraphs from the novelization with their most theatrical voice. As an alternative, read the script to *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*** out loud.

- ❑ **Road Trip:** Take a journey to visit one or more of the original shooting locations for the *Buckaroo Banzai* movie. Options include: El Mirage Dry Lake, Adelanto, CA; Lakeview Medical Center, Lakeview Terrace, CA; Harbor Jail, San Pedro, CA; Biltmore, Los Angeles, CA; Clark Library, Los Angeles, CA; and Sepulveda Basin Flood Control area, San Fernando Valley, CA.

If you are planning a special celebration, please drop us a line at [World Watch One](#) to let us know! Remember, the possibilities are as endless as the stars in the sky, so find a way to celebrate that fits your interests and capacity to sponsor.



* Not to be confused with June 11th, which is the Official International Buckaroo Banzai Day, being the day Buckaroo penetrated the interdimensional barrier and shattered our notions of reality (see last issue of World Watch One).

** Copy available in pdf at scripts.com:

https://www.scripts.com/script/the_adventures_of_buckaroo_banzai_across_the_8th_dimension_615

How to Drink Like a Hong Kong Cavalier

By Steve "Rainbow Kitty" Mattsson

In the 1984 novel Buckaroo Banzai by Earl Mac Rauch, Reno describes the first time he jammed with members of the Hong Kong Cavaliers. Buckaroo's wife, Peggy, was in attendance and served the musicians a pungent liqueur from a thermos. Reno said that a sense of euphoria swept over him after drinking it and it improved his playing. Peggy demurred when he asked her what the drink was, saying only that it was a favorite with the band and not for everyone. Later, after the thermos had been drained, Reno insisted on knowing what he had been drinking. Peggy explained, "You know Buckaroo is part Mongolian? Well, it's a Mongolian drink." She hesitated and then continued, "It's...fermented mare's milk." At this point Reno crawled off to the bathroom to vomit.

The Hong Kong Cavaliers were drinking Koumiss, an alcoholic drink also commonly known as Airag which has been the preferred beverage of the horsemen of the Central Asian steppes for millennia. Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, and the ancestors of Hanoi Xan and Buckaroo Banzai were all weaned on it. It is still popular in Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan today.

Ancient Mongol warriors relied on horses for all aspects of their daily lives. They rode them for transportation, they burned horses' dung for fire, but they ate them only under extreme circumstances. The harsh conditions of the steppe required the use of renewable resources whenever possible. Mare's milk was the obvious choice for a sustainable source of protein.

There was a problem, though. Almost ninety percent of the population of Mongolia is lactose intolerant and mare's milk has forty percent more lactose than cow's milk. These factors make raw mare's milk suitable for medicinal purposes only. By fermenting the milk, the lactose is converted into lactic acid, carbon dioxide, and alcohol. This makes the protein, calcium, and other micro nutrients in mare's milk digestible. It can also



Straight from the horse's, er... Just as in ancient times, horses remain a vital resource and symbol of cultural identity in Mongolia, where they fractionally outnumber the human population to this day.



Acquired taste: Actress **Julia Roberts** reacts to her first encounter with Koumiss in the ***Nature*** episode "Wild Horses of Mongolia with Julia Roberts" (2000).

give you a pretty good buzz. The amount of alcohol in Koumiss varies based on temperature, fermenting time, and the horse's diet, but is usually between three and six percent—about the same as an American beer. Reno's nausea probably had more to do with food aversion than the amount of alcohol he consumed.

The taste of Koumiss is usually described as sour, but in the 13th century, Friar William of Rubruck traveled to Mongolia and describes it like this: "It is pungent on the tongue like rapé wine when drunk, and when a man has finished drinking, it leaves a taste of milk of almonds on the tongue, and it makes the inner man most joyful and also intoxicates weak heads, and greatly provokes urine." In 1995, Hillary Clinton visited Mongolia as the First Lady. While visiting a nomadic family she was offered a bowl of Koumiss. After trying a sip, she described the taste as: "...sort of like yogurt that you would leave out for a week..." In an episode of the TV program ***Nature*** called, "Wild Horses of Mongolia with Julia Roberts" (2000), the movie star also tries Koumiss. She says, "I'm shocked by the first taste. It's like fizzy, warm... yogurt." You can see video of her reaction at the 9:34 mark of this [clip](#). Neither Clinton nor Roberts commented on having their urine provoked.

The Mongols prepare Koumiss by filling a large leather sack called a Khukhuur with mare's milk. The leather has been impregnated with the natural flora needed to ferment the milk by previous batches of Koumiss. The sack is hung outside of the entrance to the yurt. Everybody who enters or exits the yurt is expected to stir the milk for a few moments with a wooden paddle called a Buluur. The Koumiss will be ready in one or two days.

Many DIYers in the United States make their own kefir, which is a close cousin to Koumiss. Because it is made with cow's milk it has less lactose, so the alcohol content is negligible. The recipe for kefir is simple: milk, kefir grains (a culture of bacteria and yeast), and 24 hours.



The old ways are best: Koumiss is still prepared in much the same way it has for centuries. The leather Khukhur serves as both an open fermentation vessel and a stable habitat for the various yeast and bacteria cultures responsible for converting the lactose in mare's milk into lactic acid, ethanol, and carbon dioxide as well as a variety of other flavor compounds such as esters and phenols.

You can make something closer to Koumiss with a few modifications to the basic kefir recipe. Start with one percent fat cow's milk; this more closely mimics the natural fat content of mare's milk. Add sugar, lactose if you're anal retentive, but the yeast in the kefir grains will consume sucrose without complaint. About one and a half grams of sugar per one hundred grams of milk should get you pretty close to the correct proportion. I suggest using a Mason jar with a pressure release fermentation lid as the vessel. This will keep the jar from exploding as carbon dioxide is generated. Agitate occasionally for about 24 hours. Strain out the kefir grains to use for your next batch. Enjoy.

The Mongols also distill Koumiss into a drink called Arkhi or "milk vodka." Twenty liters of Koumiss is needed to produce one liter of Arkhi. Because only animal products are used in the distillation, there is no danger of producing wood alcohol, the infamous substance that causes unskilled Moonshiners to go blind. Perhaps the Koumiss in Peggy's thermos was fortified with a healthy pour of Arkhi. This could also account for Reno's visceral reaction to the drink.

Yoycart.com is a Chinese website that offers Mongolian products. Enter "milk wine" into their search feature and you will be [offered a six-pack of 500ml boxes of "Pastoral Love" koumiss](#) for \$41.26 US with \$8.13 shipping. This product is currently being shipped on a slow boat from China to the Portland offices of World Watch One. Expect a review in a future issue.

You can also purchase your own "milk vodka" from the Black Cow Vodka Company of England. It is available from [their U.S. distributor](#). It costs about \$45.00 for 750 mls and \$11.50 shipping. (An adult must be home to sign for the package.) I used the "World Watch One" credit card to order a bottle and compared the Black Cow product to conventional potato vodka. Both were odorless and colorless. Both were forty percent alcohol. The taste was remarkably similar, but the milk vodka had a much silkier mouth feel. I don't know how close this is to Mongolian Arkhi, but on a scale of 1 to 88, I give it an 88.

On the last page of Buckaroo Banzai, the Hong Kong Cavaliers drink a toast of fermented mare's milk to celebrate the defeat of Lord John Worfin. Reno reflects that Koumiss is, "...a foul liquid symbolizing that in life we must take the bitter with the sweet." Is Reno being philosophical about Koumiss or is his opinion tainted by his first experience? Brew your own Koumiss or order it online and let us know what you think.

Milk Kefir grains, lactose, and fermentation lids are available on Amazon.com, but like Buckaroo always says, "When possible, buy local." A comprehensive listing of homebrew supply stores can be found at the [American Homebrewers Association website](#). While most homebrew shops concentrate on serving homebrewers of beer, cider, mead, and wine, many will be happy to special order milk kefir fermentation supplies for you as well as connect you with the local community of home fermentationists familiar with home brewing more exotic beverages like Koumiss.



A little bit of Pastoral Love, all the way from Mongolia by way of China from the folks at Yoycart.com. Tune in this August for Rainbow Kitty's Koumiss review.

Lex Luthor, Uncle Ben, and Everyone in Between: The Comic Book-Inspired Roles of Clancy Brown

By Scott "Camelot" Tate

He's fought Superman and Batman separately and together, hung Thor in chains, ordered around the Punisher, and gone up against everyone from the Teen Titans to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Once he even taught Spider-Man that with great power comes great responsibility. The Internet Movie Database currently cites 275+ acting credits for Clancy Brown, many of which derive from comic books, so let's look at a few.

Clancy's first such role came playing ruthless businessman Roger Lassen in "Half-Way Horrible" (1993), an episode of HBO's horror anthology *Tales from the Crypt*. The series was built around adapting stories from EC Comics' 1950s horror line, in this instance the source being *The Vault of Horror* #26, August-September 1952.

In 1996, villainy took a major stride forward when Clancy began one of his signature roles, voicing Lex Luthor throughout *Superman: The Animated Series* (1996-2000). Lex also turned up in other shows that shared the same continuity as *S:TAS*, including *Justice League* (2001-04) and the revamped *Justice League Unlimited* (2004-06). Clancy's voiced other versions of Lex, including several video game iterations and one elected President of the United States in the 2009 animated movie *Superman/Batman: Public Enemies*, adapted from a storyline published in *Superman/Batman* #1-6 in 2003-04. Lex Luthor is one of comics' longest-running villains, reappearing time and again since *Action Comics* #23, April 1940.

In the episode "Man to Man, Beast to Beast" (1996) of *The Incredible Hulk* animated series, the Hulk's alter ego Bruce Banner travels to Canada to consult with Clancy as fellow scientist Walter Langowski. Readers familiar with Marvel's *Alpha Flight* know that Langowski is also known as Sasquatch, who debuted in *Uncanny X-Men* #129, April 1979.

Many people forget or never knew that the 1997 Will Smith/Tommy Lee Jones film *Men in Black* was based on a comic book created by Lowell Cunningham, originally published in relative obscurity in 1990. People likewise overlook that between the first and second films there was an animated continuation, *Men in Black: The Series*. In "The Long Goodbye Syndrome" (1997) Clancy voiced an Arquillian, similar to one who had appeared in the first movie.

How many robots can Clancy be in one show? Five, collectively known as Legion Ex Machina, as frequently featured throughout *Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* (1999-2001), an animated series based on Frank Miller's 1995 comic book that spun out of the pages of Mike Allred's *Madman*.

Clancy voiced Charlie Bigelow, a.k.a. Big Time, in the animated *Batman Beyond* episode "Big Time" (2000). Charlie returned in a subsequent episode, but Clancy did not. Instead he hopped over to *Batman Beyond* spin-off *The Zeta Project* as Sheriff Wendell Morgan in the episodes "Hicksburg" and "Wired (Part



Clancy Brown, with alter-egos Lex Luthor and the giant fire demon of Thor: Ragnarok, Surtur.

2)" (both 2001). Neither Bigelow nor Morgan had direct roots in printed comics, but tangential ties to an icon such as Batman merit mention.

In 2003, he voiced the villainous Trident in "Deep Six," an episode of the animated *Teen Titans* TV series. As a print character, Trident has a couple of precedents: The name stems from a villain who appeared in *Teen Titans* #33, July 1983, but the physical appearance and overall attributes of the animated Trident are more closely inspired by a group of semi-aquatic humanoids called the Deep Six who first appeared in *New Gods* #2, April-May 1971.

One of Batman's most persistent villains is Mr. Freeze, originally called Mr. Zero in *Batman* #121, February 1959. He's been portrayed onscreen numerous times over the years, both in animated and live-action form. Clancy's turn came in the animated series *The Batman* (2004-08), with his version of Freeze featured in a handful of episodes starting with "The Big Chill" (2004). But this wasn't the only iconic villain Clancy voiced on *The Batman*. Over the course of the series, Bane was performed by Joaquin de Almeida, then Ron Perlman, and then Clancy in "The Batman/Superman Story" (2007). In fact he does double duty in the episode, also returning as Luthor.

Clancy voiced a couple of minor one-shot characters in *Spider-Man: The New Animated Series* back in 2003, but 2008-09's *The Spectacular Spider-Man* cast him as characters previously seen in the comics. In "Survival of the Fittest" (2008) he's a bruiser named Ox, part of a criminal crew called the Enforcers first seen in *Amazing Spider-Man* #10, March 1964. In that same episode he's also Alex O'Hirn, soon to become the Rhino, who first fought Spidey in *Amazing Spider-Man* #41, October 1966. Danny Trejo took over the role of Ox in subsequent episodes, but Clancy's Rhino continued to pop up in several episodes throughout the series.

However, Clancy's greatest contribution to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* was a non-villainous role. In most versions of Spider-Man's history, George Stacy looms almost as large as a father figure for Peter Parker as his beloved Uncle Ben, stretching back to his first appearance in *Amazing Spider-Man* #56, January 1968. As an NYPD captain, his relationship with Spider-Man was sometimes complicated but mostly supportive. As the father of Peter's girlfriend Gwen, his approval of Peter rarely

wavered. Clancy's Captain Stacy featured in several episodes starting with "Persona."

Around that same time, Clancy also took on Marvel's foremost mutants in the animated series **Wolverine and the X-Men** (2008-09). Mister Sinister has been a thorn in the team's side since *Uncanny X-Men* #221, September 1987. Now with Clancy in the recording booth, he faced the team in three episodes of this series: "eXcessive Force," "Guardian Angel," and "Shades of Grey."

In 2010 Clancy voiced villains in two episodes of the animated **Batman: The Brave and the Bold**. In "The Golden Age of Justice" he was Per Degaton, a would-be world dominator who fought the Justice Society of America. His first print appearance was in *All-Star Comics* #35, June/July 1947. In "The Super Batman of Planet X," he's an evil space-based genius named Xel Rohtul whose name, likeness, and characterization are all reminiscent of Lex Luthor. The episode blended elements from two sources. Much of the plot is inspired by *Batman* #113, February 1958, but Rohtul derives from a similar character named Thorul in *World's Finest* #91, November/December 1957.

Clancy voiced an animated version of Thor's father Odin in a few episodes of **The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes** (2010-2013). Marvel's Odin was first seen in *Journey into Mystery* #85, October 1962, after having been mentioned the previous month.

In the summer of 2011, fans could catch Clancy in two comics-inspired theatrical films. In the live-action **Green Lantern** he voiced the creature Parallax, whose comic book roots go back to either 1994 or 2004, depending on your perspective of a complicated situation. A few weeks after *GL*'s premiere Clancy appeared onscreen as Meachum in **Cowboys & Aliens**, inspired by Scott Mitchell Rosenberg's 2006 graphic novel.

For the episode "Performance" (2012) of the animated series **Young Justice**, Clancy voiced King Faraday, a secret agent who first appeared in print in *Danger Trail* #1, July 1950. Then he plagued Green Lantern again as an alien warlord named Zartok in two episodes of **Green Lantern: The Animated Series**, "Lost Planet" and "Invasion" (both also 2012), a character original to the show.

Between 2012 and 2016, Clancy kept busy in various roles in yet another Spider-Man animated series, **Ultimate Spider-Man**, including characters such as the Taskmaster, first seen in *Avengers* #195, May 1980, and the Red Hulk, a previous supporting character reinvented in *Hulk* #1, January 2008. But Clancy's most notable role here was as one of the most iconic figures in all of comicsdom, Peter Parker's beloved Uncle Ben, first seen in *Amazing Fantasy* #15, August 1962. Having previously voiced George Stacy in another series, Clancy Brown can claim the distinction of being the only actor to portray both of the two most positive male role models in Spider-Man's life.

Around that same period, from 2012-2017, Clancy also voiced various roles in several episodes of **Teenage Mutant Ninja**

Turtles, most frequently as one of the Turtles' antagonists, Rahzar. Rahzar has been incorporated into the TMNT comics on a few occasions but originated in the live-action film *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze* (1991), although neither his body nor his voice there was provided by Clancy. However, Clancy did voice Rahzar again in the similarly titled *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Danger of the Ooze* video game (2014).

DC Nation Shorts (2011-2014) aired at sporadic intervals on Cartoon Network. In 2013, they did a three-part serial featuring the oddball superhero team known as the Doom Patrol. Clancy voiced both the heroic Negative Man and the villainous General Immortus, both of whom date back to the Doom Patrol's print debut in *My Greatest Adventure* #80, June 1963.

Clancy featured in every episode of the animated **Hulk and the Agents of S.M.A.S.H.** (2013-2015) as the voice of the Red Hulk, and also as characters such as Black Bolt, the Kree Supreme Intelligence, and Uatu the Watcher. He also performed various guest roles in nine episodes of the animated **Avengers Assemble** (2014-2017), often reprising characters he'd done in other shows such as Taskmaster and the Red Hulk. His Taskmaster cropped up again in the 2014 animated movie *Iron Man and Captain America: Heroes United*.

In 2014 Clancy also voiced a stop-motion version of Gorilla Grodd for **Robot Chicken DC Comics Special 2: Villains in Paradise**. The telepathic simian is one of the Flash's traditional villains, having first appeared in *The Flash* #106, May 1959. Then in 2014-15 Clancy appeared as General Wade Eiling in four episodes of The CW's live-action series **The Flash**, starting with "Plastique." Eiling's storyline there is intertwined with that of Gorilla Grodd, although *Flash*'s Grodd is voiced by someone else. General Eiling has appeared in various DC comics starting with *Captain Atom* #1, March 1987.

After voicing animated Marvel properties for years Clancy finally joined the live-action Marvel Cinematic Universe in 2016-17, or the streaming televised corners of it, anyway. He played Colonel Ray Schoonover, a recurring character in Netflix's **Daredevil** and **The Punisher** who was the former commanding officer of Marine-turned-vigilante Frank Castle. In the comics, Schoonover debuted in *Punisher War Journal* #4, March 1989.

Clancy landed a second role in the MCU voicing the fire demon Surtur in 2017's **Thor: Ragnarok**. That film also prominently featured TABB alum Jeff Goldblum as the Grandmaster, although the two characters didn't cross paths onscreen. Surtur, like other *Thor*-related characters, is a traditional figure from Norse mythology, but his appearances in Marvel comics date back to *Journey into Mystery* #97, October 1963.

Whether hero or villain, animated or in the flesh, Clancy Brown's versatility shines through in his comics-related works as much as everywhere else in his career. Which is your favorite, and what dream role would you like to see him in next? 

Comics Bullpen

World Watch One Staff

Artists have memorialized *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*

Banzai in drawings and paintings since the docudrama's release in 1984. A remarkable number of those artists, especially in the realm of comic books, have also been fans. Occasionally, their love of Buckaroo will appear as a sly reference in a single frame of an otherwise unconnected comic book title. Sometimes Dr. Banzai and the Hong Kong Cavaliers become the source of commercial interest from publishers like Moonstone Books during their run of *Buckaroo Banzai* comics appearing from 2006-2012. Other times fans will commission a favorite artist to create a one-of-a-kind work of their favorite character.

In this issue we collected some of these disparate and eclectic images that you might not otherwise know about. Our success in contacting the artists for comment varied. Some provided enough background and commentary to fill a full article. Others we were unable to contact at all.

Given the nature of the material in this section, we have done our best to arrange artists and their images on the page in a manner that is visually coherent rather than chronological, topical, or alphabetical in order. Longer pieces follow. We hope you enjoy this trip down the rabbit hole of Buckaroo comic art as much as we have enjoyed assembling it. Any other artists out there who could share their unseen Banzai art would have our gratitude—Pia Guerra, we're talking to you.

Excelsior!

Erica Henderson

In 2013 former animator Erica Henderson was about a year away from blowing up as the artist for Marvel Comics' *Squirrel Girl* and Archie Comics' *Jughead*. One of the projects she was working on was a series of re-imagined posters for, "...movies that I think are smarter than people generally give them credit for." Of course *Buckaroo Banzai* was on the top of that list.

Buckaroo may have topped her list for other reasons as well. As she explained on her Tumblr account during the creation of the print, "Can we just start calling Buckaroo Banzai "Handsome Boys: The Movie"? I think it's a more accurate description. Young Peter Weller, Clancy Brown, Jeff Goldblum! SWOON!"

Later, Erica posted another Buckaroo project on her Tumblr that she described like this, "So, a few years back, I was asked to do a cover for a Buckaroo Banzai book that never happened. This is the first draft of the cover (They had me change the outfit to the suit from the music number and the gun to a sword)." In 2015, *World Watch One* caught up with Erica at the Rose City Comic Con 2018 in Portland, OR.



"I have started working on a thing:" Erica's first pass on a print for the time honored docudrama, **"Handsome Boys: The Movie,"** aka **The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai.**



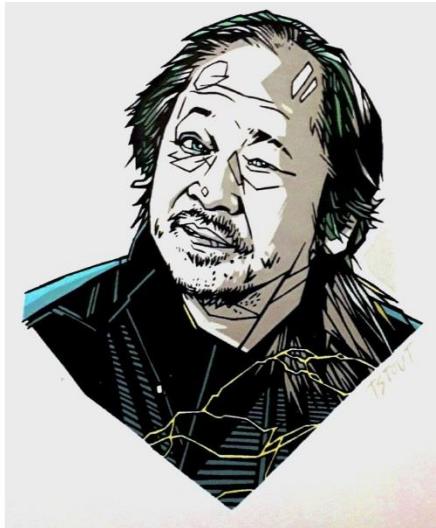
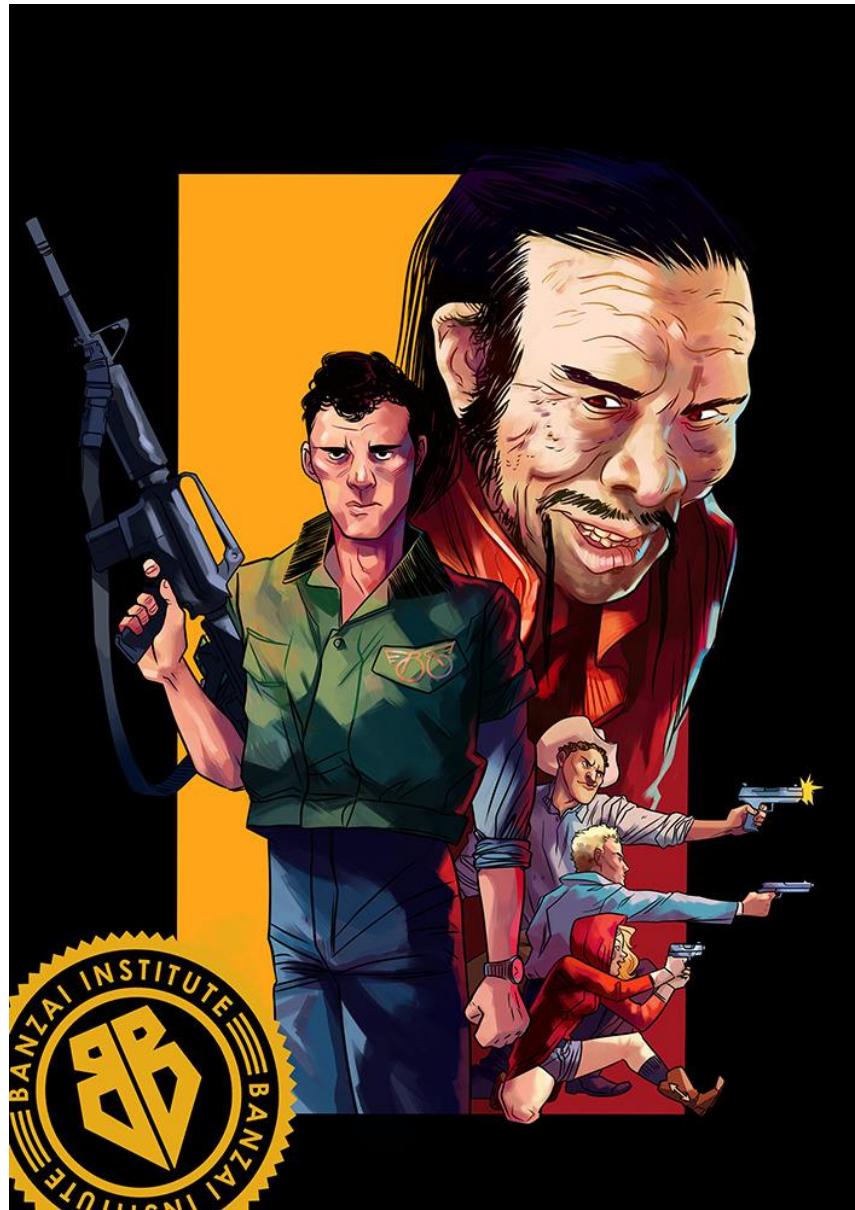
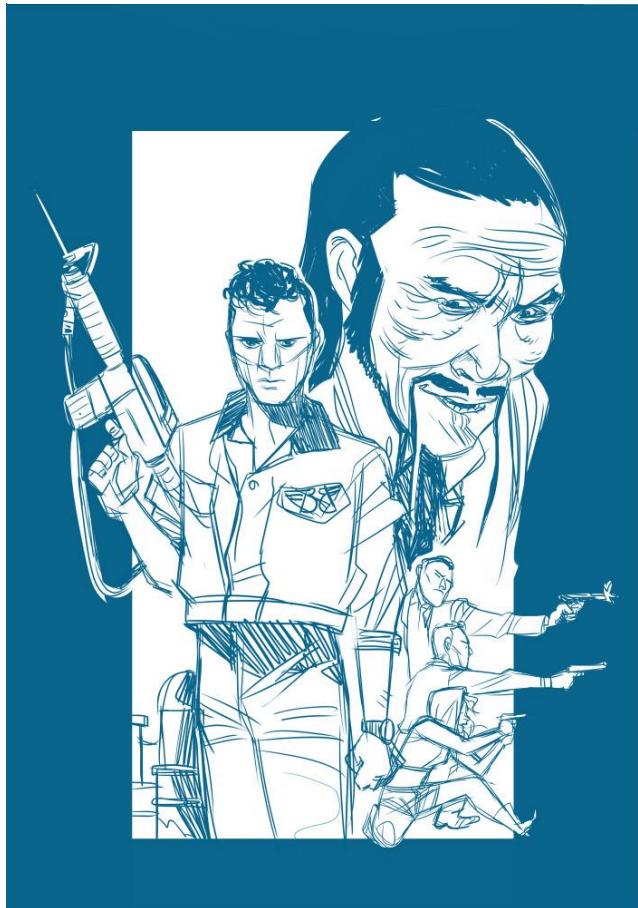
"Hong Kong Cavaliers print-stage 2: the inking:" According to Erica's Tumblr notes, "This took forever but that might be because while I was trying to ink this I put on **Naked Lunch** and then **Videodrome**. It's hard to get things done when you're completely uneasy."



"DONE!" Erica declared this print to be "...incredibly 80's-tastic, not counting **Alien**," which was another subject of the series. Clearly the print was crafted with a lot of love. Her final word, "I think I spent more time on this one than any of the others." 'Nuff said.

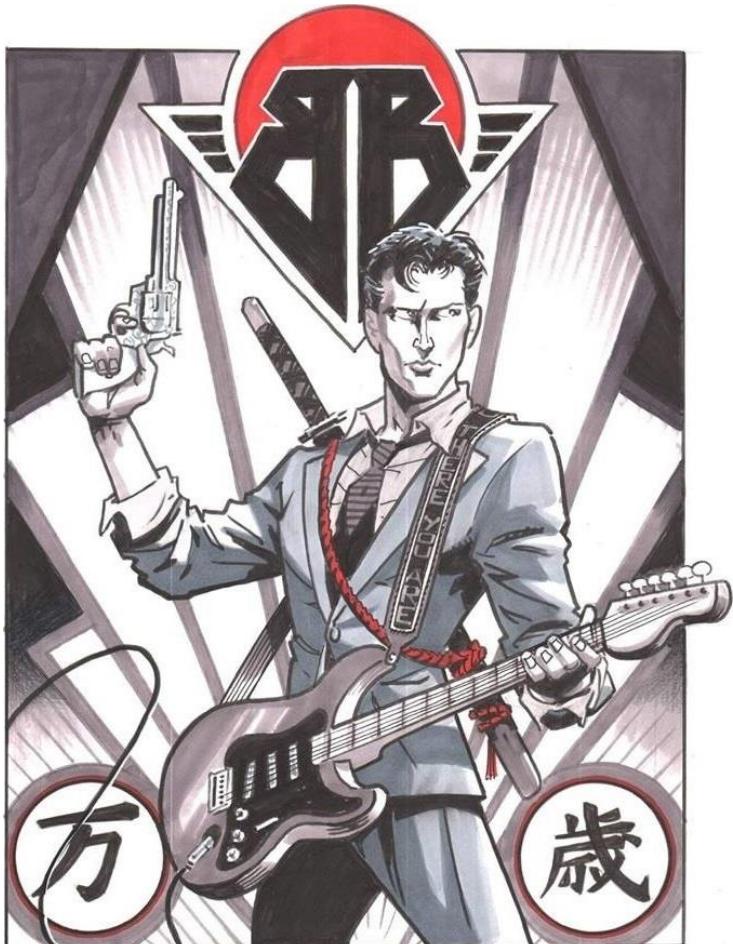
Erica confirmed that the unused Buckaroo cover was indented for the Moonstone Books series before it ended (**Below & Right**). She also mentioned that her poster series had been offered for sale as a fundraiser for the Brattle Theater in Cambridge, MA. Currently, the *Buckaroo Banzai* posters are all gone.

Read more about Erica's project at [Wired's website](#). See more of Erica's work on her [Tumblr account](#)



Tyler Stout

Tyler Stout is a Pacific Northwest artist known for his high-end silk screen prints of custom music and movie posters. More affordably priced are his "Pros N Cons" handbill series. Buckaroo Banzai (**Far Left**) and Egg Chen from *Big Trouble in Little China* (**Near Left**) appear in "Pros N Cons" series 4. Find more of Tyler's work [at his website](#).



Magik Hat

The character Magik (Illyana Rasputin,) sports a nifty Buckaroo Banzai ball-cap in this angsty panel (**Right**) from *X-Men* #192 (1985) with art by John Romita Jr. and Dan Green.

Matt Wagner

Comic art fan Tommy Vernale has been commissioning drawings from Eisner Award winning artist Matt Wagner since the '80s. Matt is best known for his creator owned comics *Grendel* and *Mage*. Tommy likes to ask Matt to draw subjects he's not usually associated with, like Buckaroo Banzai. Tommy picked up this cool piece (**Left**) from Matt at the 2017 Emerald City Comic-Con in Seattle. Matt gave the half Asian Buckaroo a piercing set of manga inspired eyes and a killer guitar strap. Tommy says his next commission from Matt will be Jack Burton from *Big Trouble in Little China*. We're looking forward to seeing it.



Craig Boldman

In 2016 Archie Comics artist Craig Boldman drew a series of digital Art Cards featuring a comprehensive collection of fictional vehicles. The set included Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, the Monkeemobile, and of course, Buckaroo Banzai's Jet Car (**Left**). Currently he is working on an eclectic series of Art Cards featuring famous puppets, including Punch & Judy, Triumph the Insult Dog, and the cast of "Thunderbirds." Check out more of his work [at his website](#).

Comics Focus: Mark Texeria

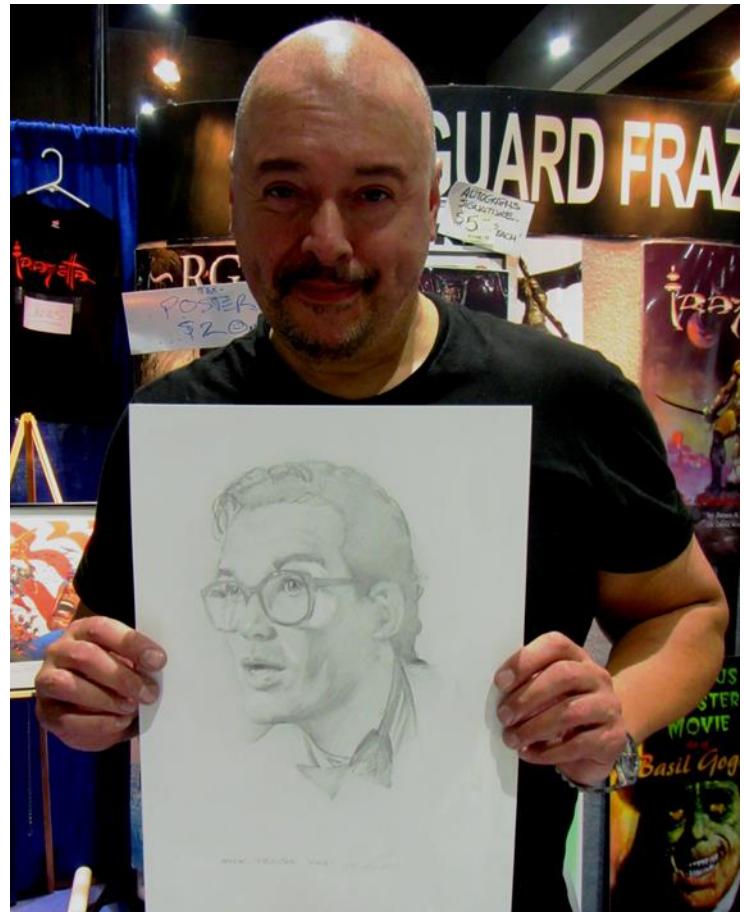
Buckaroo Banzai's First Comic Book Artist

By Steve Mattsson

Mark Texeria is an alumnus of the High School of Art and Design and the School of Visual Arts, both in Manhattan. In his early 20s he broke into comics by doing short stories for DC's mystery titles. Later he became a fan-favorite by penciling critically-acclaimed runs of *Ghost Rider*, *The Punisher*, and *Black Panther* for Marvel. In 2009 Vanguard Publishing released TEX: The Art of Mark Texeria¹ as part of their Artist Retrospective Series.

Mark's first big break at Marvel Comics came in 1983 penciling the adaptation of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*. Comic book adaptations of films are notoriously difficult to produce. Work on the comic cannot start until the movie is nearing completion and then the process needs to be rushed so the comic and film can be released simultaneously. Adding to the degree of difficulty is the need for the actors to approve their likenesses. This adds time while waiting for approval and doing revisions on an already compressed deadline.

We caught up with Mark at the 2018 Comic-Con International: San Diego. Despite the difficulties of film adaptations, Mark remembered the project fondly. He elaborated, "It was great! Other members of the creative team and I got to meet the cast and crew of Buckaroo at the Chateau Marmont Hotel in West Hollywood. It was the most '80s experience ever! I remember walking past the bungalows outside the hotel and thinking one of these is where John Belushi died.² Then, as we were entering the hotel, the band Duran Duran was just leaving. I was also amazed at how tall John Lithgow was—he seemed about 6'7'!³ Mark also got to see a very early rough cut of the film, "There was no music or special effects yet. This was long before Jeff



Goldblum became a star, so we were wondering what the deal with this New Jersey character was."

Mark was kind enough to do a new drawing of Buckaroo, 35 years after working on the adaptation as a young artist. Once a member of Team Banzai, always a member of Team Banzai!



¹TEX: The Art of Mark Texeria is out-of-print, but is available at collector's prices at <https://tinyurl.com/y7gxpfiy>

²John Belushi died on March 5, 1982. *Wired*, the biographical film of Belushi's life and death, was written by the creator of Buckaroo Banzai, Earl Mac Rauch.

³John Lithgow is 6'4".

State of the Art: In the go-go world of film merchandising, marketing, and licensing, grace under pressure on a razor sharp deadline is critical. These frames from the original art for the Marvel Comics adaptation of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* are remarkably true to the final version of the film considering it was made while the movie was still in post-production.

Der Comic-Kampf von Buckaroo!

By DeWayne "BuckarooTrooper" Todd

The Banzai Institute takes pride in being an international organization. So when the *Buckaroo Banzai* docudrama was released in the United States, the Institute partnered with Twentieth Century Fox for international distribution of the film. With the Cold War waging across the globe, and the *Deutschland* still a divided country, Germany was chosen as a target market for the motion picture (*kino* in German). A magazine-sized comic adaptation was developed to support the film release with some hope that copies would find their way into the hands of Blue Blaze Irregulars behind the Iron Curtain.

The interior of this comic adaptation is identical to the *Marvel Super Special* #33 which was written by Bill Mantlo, penciled by Mark Texeira, inked by Armando Gil, and released in the States. But in this case, a new cover was created for the German release that features a montage of exciting images from the film, with a bit of artistic license.

The cover promises, "64 gripping color-comic pages on the thrilling struggle of Buckaroo Banzai and Penny Priddy against the threat from the Eighth Dimension! An outstanding sci-fi, action adventure!"

In addition to the unique cover, the inside credits of the magazine give descriptions of the movie stating that, "The protagonist of this \$17 million film is the young Buckaroo Banzai, the world's best brain surgeon, scientist, and rock 'n' roll singer - a daredevil like this has not been in the cinema since the days of Douglas Fairbanks Jr." That is quite a comparison!

Although the interior article declares that director Rick Richter "...came from the school of George Lucas," the article later



states that, "Buckaroo Banzai is a movie that deliberately avoids gigantic space battles in the style of Star Wars; but places the emphasis on enthralling and action-packed scenes..." And U.S. filmgoers imagined it was a budget issue!



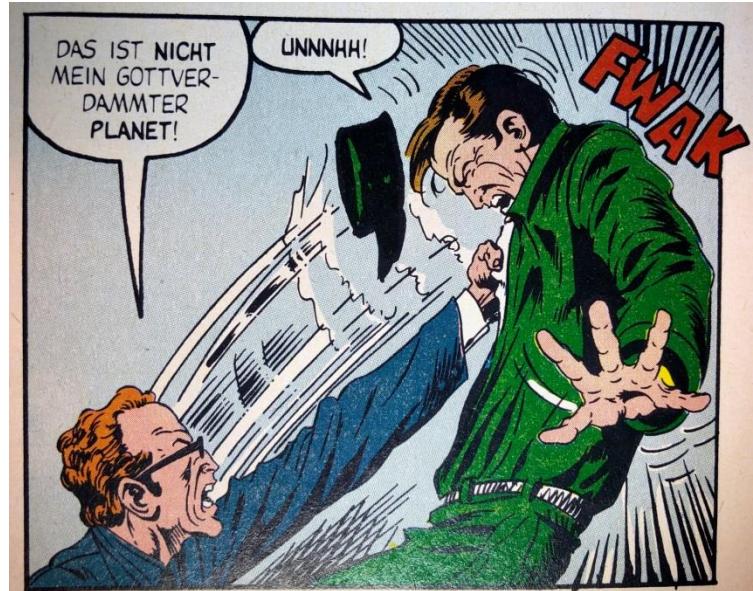
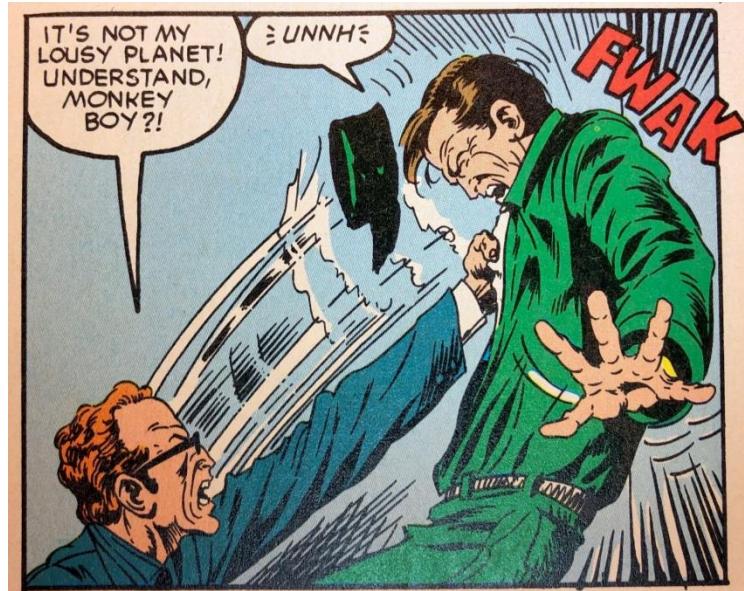
Panel Comparison: "...No matter where you go, there you are!" was translated as, "You are not alone!" followed by, "And that's why this song is just for you Peggy!" We're guessing that the Zen character of the English dialogue doesn't translate well into German.

Occasionally, even we at the Banzai Institute allow something to slip past our censors as we attempt to manage the quality and content of information about Buckaroo Banzai. Nothing escapes our audit teams, not even comic books!

Unfortunately, the German edition has several examples of where the translation was lacking. In fact, some very important elements and ideas were simply lost in translation. It is believed that this deliberate sabotage of key messages was the work of agents of the World Crime League that had infiltrated the translation team.



“...Nobody is a nobody” (Above, Left) was translated, “That’s not true!” Apparently, the title of the book by Banzai and Hikita (Above, Right) was too controversial for German audiences.



The profane outburst of the CEO from Yoyodyne was edited in English (Above, Left), but reinserted for the German audiences (Above, Right). Unfortunately, there doesn’t appear to have been a German word for Monkey Boy, so the last part of the sentence was removed to leave, “This is not my goddamn planet!”

Buckaroo Banzai as The Last Starfighter?!

World Watch One Staff

What if the Rylan Star League had recruited Buckaroo Banzai to fight the Ko-Dan Empire instead of young Alex Rogan? Buckaroo as the gunner on the advanced prototype Gunstar ship aided by the alien navigator, Grig, against Lord Kril’s Ko-Dan Armada would have made a wild mid-80s sci-fi movie mash-up.

The cover to the comic book adaptation to the Banzai/Starfighter cross-over might have looked something like the cover to the *Film-und Video-Comic-Jahrbuch* #1 published in 1986 by Zeitschriften-und Buchverlag Interpart GMBH & Co. This 120-page German annual reprinted the adaptation of *The Last Starfighter* from *Marvel Super Special* #31 and the adaptation of *Buckaroo Banzai* from *Marvel Super Special* #33.

The cover artist for the annual took panels from each story, manipulated them, and then redrew them into a single illustration suitable for both *The Last Starfighter* and *Buckaroo Banzai*. This is not the first time in comic book history that the cover promised more than the interior could deliver.

While *Buckaroo Banzai* premiered on August 10th, 1984, *The Last Starfighter* premiered on July 13th, 1984. Its comic book adaptation was written by Bill Mantlo, penciled by Bret Blevins, and inked by Tony Salmons.



Just for Summer of '84 box-office context—*Marvel Super Special* #30 featured an adaptation of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, #32 featured *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, and #34 featured *Sheena*.

Unseen Banzai Comic Book Art

World Watch One Staff

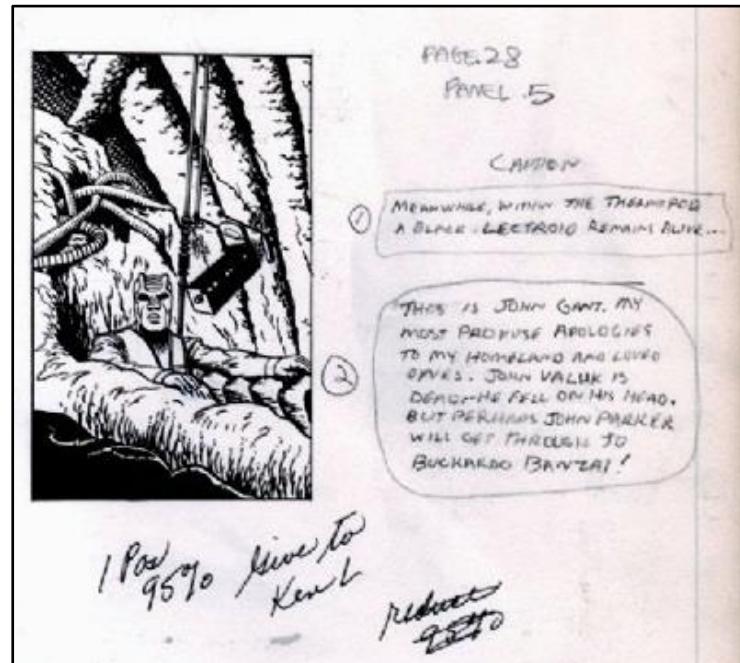
Recently, original comic book art collector Daniel Best posted an unpublished version of page 21 from Marvel's comic book adaptation of *Buckaroo Banzai* on the "Original Comic Art Collectors" forum on Facebook. The page was fascinating for a few reasons.

Daniel stated that, although the inks for the adaptation are credited to Armando Gil, this page was inked by Dave Simons. Gil and Simons were classmates at workshops taught by legendary comic book artist John Buscema and they also shared a studio. Simons, who died of cancer in 2009, was best known for a great run on Marvel's *Ghost Rider* during the '80s. Daniel explained, "I found this page on eBay and Dave told me that he definitely inked it. He often inked pages for Armando to help him out of the dreaded deadline doom." With Buckaroo being a film adaptation, deadlines were likely doomier than usual.

Also fascinating is the fifth panel, which shows Professor Hikita revealing that Buckaroo saw a U.S. Navy frigate in the 8th Dimension. Both the screenplay and the novel contain this scene, but the movie does not. Daniel also posted the published version of the page for comparison. In it the large panel with the frigate was pasted over with three redrawn panels, more closely adapting the finished film.

This information lead to an internet search which turned up a few more examples of last minute corrections. These occurred because the film and the comic book were being worked on simultaneously. These corrections included original art of patches for pages 13 and 28. The artboard with the patch for page 13 also contained a sketch for page 47. (*Continued next page*)

The quantum realities of comic book production: Adapting films to comic books begins as the film is in production and long before editing a film determines the final sequence of scenes and the length of each individual scene. This invariably results in the creation of single panel **patches** to replace obsolete or unused portions of the script in a comics adaptation, such as these examples for page 13 panel one (**Above Right, Top**) as Dr. Lizardo pierces the dimensional barrier in 1938, and page 28 panel five (**Above Right, Bottom**) in which John Gant reports the death of John Valuka to the Black Lectroid father ship. Patches are seen in action in this side-by-side comparison (**Below**) of the unpublished original version of page 21 (**Left**) and the patched and published version of the same page (**Right**). Professor Hikita's scripted but ultimately cut reference to Buckaroo's encounter with a U.S. Navy frigate in the 8th dimension is patched by three panels that better reflect the events of the news conference as they appear in the final cut of the film.



(Cont.) An unpublished version of page 33 was also discovered. This version shows an unnamed security guard, rather than Sam the mechanic, being killed by a Lectroid stinger.

If anybody else has examples of other ancient secrets and new mysteries, we'd love to share them.

B sides and alternate tracks: This sketch of Buckaroo gracefully descending from the thermopod by parachute (**Right**) on page 47 panel one appears on the same artboard containing the patch for page 13 panel one. Another example of script changes during film production is revealed on page 33 of the comic, when an anonymous security guard is killed during the Lectroid assault on the Banzai Institute in the unpublished version (**Below, Left**), only to be patched over with more film-accurate panels in the published version (**Below, Right**).



Unseen Art on the Unseen Banzai Comic Book Art

Daniel Best also shared a lovely drawing by Dave Simons that is on the back of the unpublished page 21 artboard. (**Right**).

The pose of the corseted woman was recognized by comic book artist Steve Leialoha, who posted the source image by fashion photographer Horst P. Horst (**Left**). Steve also posted a drawing by French comics icon Moebius (**Center**), using the same photograph as reference. It is interesting to see how two talented artists interpret the same subject matter.



"It's the Cover of the Latest Issue!"

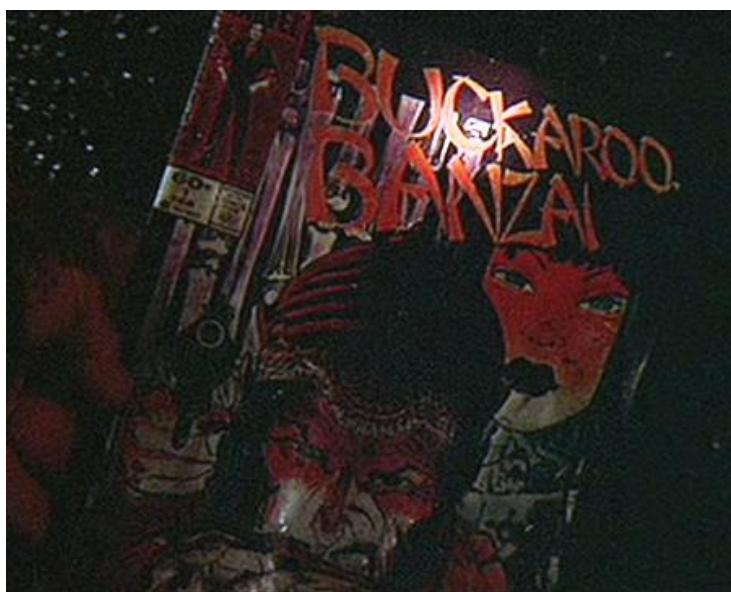
By Steve Mattsson

I first became a fan of Michael Wm. Kaluta's art while he was doing his adaptations of *Carson of Venus* and *The Shadow* for DC Comics. He took his work to the next level when he joined artists Jeffery Jones, Barry Windsor-Smith, and Bernie Wrightson to form The Studio¹. There they created a synergy that inspired amazing work from all four artists.

In 1983, Michael began his magnum opus, *Starstruck*.² The first *Starstruck* graphic novel was published in the U.S. by Marvel Comics. Kaluta hadn't been doing much work for Marvel Comics proper, so he was surprised when he was contacted by editor-in-chief Jim Shooter.

This is how Michael tells the story: "A year before Buckaroo Banzai came out, Jim Shooter pulled me into his office: I was freelance, so I'd never been in there. He showed me a thick book on the history of the pulps and asked if I could come up with something "pulpy." He didn't want the art to look like the standard Marvel approach. He believed that even his best bullpen artists wouldn't be able to hit the right sense of '30s noir that they wanted for the prop cover to a Buckaroo Banzai comic book.

I was paid double my regular rate and everyone at Marvel and with the film were pleased! I had no idea the cover was going to be sort of sloppily hand-colored on a photostat for its "film moment." I really wish I'd got to paint it. I would have for nothing extra at the time. I was doing painted covers for the *Conan the King* series, so it would have been no problem to



Buckaroo Banzai—it's the latest issue!

"This creatively fertile period was documented in the book, *The Studio* published in 1979 by Dragon's Dream. *The Studio* is out-of-print, but [is available at collectors' prices](#).

²The collected and re-mastered *Starstruck* is available from [IDW Publishing](#).



Pulpy Goodness: Shown above is an example of the hand-painted *King Conan* covers that Kaluta was producing at the time he created the **Buckaroo Banzai** prop comic book cover in 1983.

really do up the Buckaroo piece! I also had no idea that the art's one or two seconds of screen time would impress the moviegoers like it did.

There's a further story. It's one that you can find online with a little searching. It has to do with the film crew making BB not realizing that my faux-Banzai cover wasn't actually the cover to a real Buckaroo Banzai comic book. They had a photostat of the b/w original to work with (and probably a dozen or so more). During production, the Santa Monica comic book store Hi-Dee-Ho! Comics, fairly local to the film set, began to get a stream of phone calls from production assistants asking if they could come by the store and pick up a handful of the actual comic. No matter how often the film crew was told there really wasn't a comic, they insisted. They even tried sending folks to the store, pretending to be "just fans," requesting the Buckaroo Banzai comic book. It's a funny story, especially if you can find it told by the Hi-Dee-Ho! sales folks who were tasked by it!



The Gary Martin re-inked version of the Kaluta Original.

At the time I got the nod for the Buckaroo project, I didn't think Jim Shooter even knew I was alive. The whole experience was flattering and fun!"

As a Mike Kaluta fan and a Buckaroo Banzai fan, I think the original art for the prop comic book cover would be the holy grail piece for any Buckaroo Banzai collection. I asked Mike if the film studio returned his original art and if he still had it.

His answer was: "The original art is out there somewhere in somebody's collection. It was a very sought-after piece since from the time I finished it. I've lost track of which collector owns it right now, but I can figure it down to one of three people."

I asked the question for strictly academic purposes. Some of Kaluta's art from this period goes for low-five figures at auction. This is too rich for my blood, but there was another possibility. Michael has been doing re-creations of some of his classic work [through his website](#). His cover re-creations are priced at about a tenth of what his "original originals" are going

For Further Reading

Edgar Rice Burroughs' Pirates of Venus was adapted for comics by writer Len Wein and artist Mike Kaluta. It originally appeared as back-up stories in DC's *Korak Son of Tarzan* #46-56 and *Tarzan* #230. Kaluta took over the writing chores from Wein with *Korak* #51. Kaluta finished Pirates of Venus on his own and then adapted Burroughs' Lost on Venus. Although these stories first appeared during the early '70s, they still look great today. They are currently being reprinted as Carson of Venus by [American Mythology](#). Ask for them at your local comic book shop.

for on the collector's market, but even that is too expensive for me.

I had another idea. There are [high-res scans](#) of Kaluta's Banzai cover on the internet. I could print out a full-size image of Michael's cover in non-photo blue on illustration board and have him re-ink the piece. Perhaps saving the penciling step would bring the price down to something I could afford. Unfortunately, as an artistic challenge, Kaluta prefers to start his re-creations from scratch. No discount.

Okay, perhaps I could get another artist to ink Michael's blue-line pencils for a price that wouldn't break the bank, but who? Gary Martin literally wrote the book on comic book inking. Gary's The Art of Comic Book Inking³ is the definitive text on the subject. Gary is also a Buckaroo Banzai fan and a former studio mate of mine. I asked and he gave me a "friends and family" discount to ink the Kaluta blue-line. Now I own an amazing Buckaroo Banzai collectible. The differences between Michael's original and the Martin inked version are subtle—Kaluta has a more spontaneous inking style, while Gary's has a more controlled line. Martin's contributions give the illustration a more lush feel and I couldn't be happier. 



Rainbow Kitty smugly holds a blue-line of the Kaluta original in his left hand and the Gary Martin inked re-creation in his right. The size differential is because Gary chose to make his own copy of the art on the type of illustration board he preferred.

³The Art of Comic Book Inking is out-of-print, but it too is [available at collectors' prices](#).

Lost Souls of Development Hell: The Buckaroo Banzai projects that never were

By Sean "Figment" Murphy

Development hell or **development limbo**, according to Wikipedia, is media industry jargon for a project that remains in development (often moving between different crews, scripts, or studios) without progressing to completion. Projects in development hell are not officially cancelled, but work on them slows or stops.

Buckaroo Banzai has a long history of attempts to bring the franchise back in many different forms: film, television, comic, and novel. The problem that has plagued many of these attempts is the tangled rights issues with the film. For example, several companies such as ABC-TV, Fox, MGM, Polygram, the Sci-Fi Channel, and Warner Bros have all, at one time or another, tried to bring Buckaroo Banzai to the small screen. All were stymied by those nasty rights issues.

An interesting thread that appears again and again during these attempts is the Banzai fan in the right place at the wrong time. There is typically someone at a company, usually a Banzai fan, who discovers that the company "owns" Buckaroo's rights and this person wants to see if they can do something with the property. They reach out to Rick and Mac to see what is possible, discussions occur, rights issues rear their ugly heads, and things go into development hell. Then the process repeats itself. Luckily, all is not doom and gloom. As we'll see with the Buckaroo Banzai comics, sometimes things can actually work out for the best and be unleashed upon the world.

FILM



The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai across the Eighth Dimension was released on August 15th, 1984.

A sequel, *Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League*, is mentioned at the end of the film but has not, to date, materialized.

Attempts to mount a sequel to the film were never seriously considered as the original film was not a financial success and the film rights were always in limbo. When Rauch was asked if there was ever a film script written for *Against the World Crime League*, he said "No, there was never a script written, at least never completed. Maybe there were fragments or some ideas

Buckaroo Banzai Attempts - The Short Form

FILM

- The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension (Released by MGM in 1984)
- Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League (Never written)

TV SHOWS

- Heroes in Trouble (Written 1986, never shot)
- Buckaroo Banzai: Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries (Written 1998 - 2000, never shot)
- Banzai Institute TV Series (Discussed 2002, never written)
- The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Series Pilot (Written by Frank Darabont in 2002, never shot)
- Animated Buckaroo Banzai (Discussed with Warner Bros. Animation in 2011, never written)
- Buckaroo Banzai TV Show (Discussed by Kevin Smith in 2016, never written?)

COMICS

- Buckaroo Banzai (Movie adaptation. Released by Marvel Comics in 1984)
- Return of the Screw et al. (Story continuation. Released by Moonstone Books from 2006 - 2012)

NOVEL

- Buckaroo Banzai (Released 1984, reprinted 2001)
- Lizardo Quartet of novels (One sequel novel written 1998-2002, never published)
- Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League (Dark Horse, 2019)

LEGEND

- Published/Released work
- Unwritten, Unpublished, or Unproduced work
- Work in Progress with deal in place, not yet released

that were later incorporated into the *Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries* TV script."

In the years since the film's release, its cult status has grown, inspiring many attempts to bring Buckaroo to the small screen.

TELEVISION



TV Attempt the First (1986)

The very first attempt to create a Buckaroo Banzai TV series occurred soon after the film's release. In 1986, ABC-TV was interested in perusing a television version of Buckaroo Banzai.

David Begelman, who'd backed the film and owned the rights at the time, refused to play ball when ABC expressed interest. As Richter explained to World Watch One in 2004, "Begelman owned all the rights, and he was really disgruntled. He thought we had screwed him over somehow [and] he was going to do everything in his power to kill Buckaroo."

Richter and Rauch did not want to squander Buckaroo's opportunity at ABC-TV. Thus *Heroes in Trouble* was born. The following excerpt is taken from [Heroes in Trouble - The Story Behind the Other Attempt at Banzai TV by Scott Tate](#).

The entire article and script review is highly recommended.

Richter and Rauch, along with Dan Lupovitz (a production assistant on the film), hit upon a plan that was elegant in its simplicity: reinvent Buckaroo from the ground up. Starting with a vaguely similar tone and premise, they could rework the details into something fresh. By introducing new Banzai-like characters and situations, they could effectively create a whole new property – *Heroes in Trouble* – which could then take on a life of its own.

"We conceived it entirely for television after being unable to get the TV rights at that time for BB," Richter recently elaborated. "In other words, there was nothing on paper and no plot worked out when Mac began the *Heroes* pilot script. I don't think we had the foggiest idea of how one develops a TV pilot."

So what happened to *Heroes in Trouble*?

"There was some genuine interest," Richter stated years later, "but then ABC purchased *Max Headroom*... I think the script [for *Heroes*] came in close to their pilot-decision deadline. While Mac was writing it, they made the *Headroom* acquisition. ...[*Heroes*] was truly well-received, but *Max Headroom*, an established success in England, was purchased by the network and filled their 'originality' slot."

This rejection of the *Heroes in Trouble* pilot ended the first "officially unofficial" Buckaroo Banzai TV attempt.

TV Attempt the Second (1998-2000)

The second attempt to bring a Buckaroo Banzai TV series to the air began almost 12 years later. This was called *Buckaroo Banzai: Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries*. You can read Dan Berger's exploration of what happened in [Banzai in Limbo - The Short Form by Dan Berger](#), some of which is excerpted here:

...Begelman dissolved Sherwood Productions and assumed co-ownership of Gladden Entertainment, which in turn inherited the rights to Buckaroo Banzai. By 1994, Gladden was forced to file for bankruptcy. In 1995, David Begelman committed suicide.

After a lengthy settlement, the rights to Buckaroo Banzai landed in the lap of Gladden's financial backer, French national banking institution Crédit Lyonnais...

It was at this point that Steve Gelber, an executive at PolyGram Television and Banzai devotee, made the startling discovery that the rights to Buckaroo Banzai were included in the purchase. With Begelman out of the picture, the way appeared clear for another go at a Banzai TV series. Gelber contacted Richter and Rauch through their agents to ask if they would be interested in developing the property with PolyGram.

"So we all attempted to figure out who exactly owned what rights," explained Richter. "Did the TV rights go with the movie rights? No documents could be found anywhere because Sherwood Productions, it turned out, had used its sources of independent financing in rather questionable and, one suspects, personal ways and had had, as a result, an aversion to traditional bookkeeping. In that sense they were a cutting-edge company, very Enronish, ironically very World Crime Leaguish."

...Richter's attempts to clarify the situation have met with maddening results. "Invariably, you get a call back when somebody's finally had the time to go through the tangle of contracts, and they'll inevitably say, 'We can't find any relevant paperwork on that point, so we don't want to tell you we own it or we don't,'" he said. "'You're not going to trick us saying we don't own the rights because we might, but then again we might not, and you might or maybe you don't; so there, take that.'"

In spite of the legal ambiguities involved, PolyGram, Richter, and Rauch began developing a series concept for *Buckaroo Banzai: Ancient Secrets & New Mysteries* in the summer of 1998. "So we went out to meet with PolyGram and agreed to write a pilot for them, worked out a small thread of a story and then, with them, went around to the big television development companies PolyGram might want to partner with," said Richter. "We went to ABC and NBC and CBS and Fox, and we got Fox to say, 'Wow! Yeah, we think this is a great idea. Let's do it.'"

In November of 1998, the Fox Network officially commissioned a pilot script.

The pilot script was called "Supersize Those Fries."

A revised script was delivered to Fox in December of 1999. "We got great responses from all the people at Fox, who kept passing it upward until it reached the top guy...and he passed on the project," said Rauch. "We were one pen stroke away from getting to shoot the pilot, but that's the way it is." By the Spring of 2000, Buckaroo's journey to the small screen came to an end at the hands of Sandy Grushow.

With Fox exiting the scene, future prospects for the series turned bleak. "You'd have to go around town after that thumbs down and try to make people think, 'You should do this rejected Buckaroo pilot,'" noted Richter. "The Sci-Fi channel was actually interested, though...for about ten minutes. Maybe twelve."

All was not lost as far as the story told in the *Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries* script. As described later, the TV script was adapted into comic form as *Return of the Screw* in 2006.

Before we get into the third TV attempt, we should note an event of historical significance in the timeline. The Buckaroo Banzai Special Edition DVD was released on January 4th, 2002. As we'll see, there were two more attempts to bring Banzai to the small screen in 2002 alone.

TV Attempt the Third (2002)

After two attempts to bring back Buckaroo in a standard TV series format, Richter floated a new concept - a Banzai Institute TV Series. The only place this was ever discussed was on page 65 of the February, 2002 issue of [Starlog magazine #295](#).

Richter said that he and Mac Rauch [sic] were "pitching a different kind of TV show...We're more interested in something that's a little more free-form, like a program emanating from the Banzai Institute that could be a variety show - with serious guests coming on to talk about interesting issues, crazy rock bands, third-world music, magicians, anything that the culture had that was interesting. And we could go backstage. We could break that wall and go into the control room where there's a monitor hooked into the World Watch One. We could get involved, tangentially at least, with what's happening say, in Tibet on a particular evening when Reno is not available for the show or Buckaroo is off doing something else. And suddenly, the airwaves are seized and there's a World Crime League transmission on - they've just wiped Buckaroo's show off the air and Hanoi Xan is speaking to you, and we can go into his world.

We want to do something that freer in form so that the burden of having a self-contained, very clever episode every week - one that has special effects and would probably be too costly to produce - is lifted. Instead, you would get a much more exciting, anything-can-happen kind of world with a simple structure: There's a TV show to get out every week,

but it's almost impossible to do it, because Buckaroo has so many other responsibilities, and the world won't let him alone. The Sci-Fi Channel is interested, but I don't know *how* interested."

Sadly, this concept was way ahead of its time and never got off the ground at the now SyFy Channel or anywhere else.

TV Attempt the Fourth (2002)

The fourth attempt to bring Banzai to TV screens occurred when Frank Darabont approached MGM and asked if he could take a crack at a TV script for Buckaroo Banzai. The script cover says:

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai
Series Pilot Written by Frank Darabont
Based on the movie (and related ideas) of Earl Mac Rauch,
Writer
With acknowledgements to W.D. Richter, Director

Unfortunately, we don't have access to the actual script so we don't know what adventures Buckaroo and the Hong Kong Cavaliers encountered. The first time this potential TV version even came to light was when Frank Darabont discussed that it wasn't happening at the Creative Screenwriting Expo in L.A in 2002. The following was posted on the [Aint It Cool website](#) on November 18th, 2002:

Buckaroo Banzai TV series: NOT HAPPENING. Due to "corporate needs" this show will not go forward. MGM, which owns the rights to the property, wanted a 2 hour pilot, but Darabont believed that because it needs to be fast paced, a 1 hour pilot would suffice. MGM didn't think so.

A question was posed on the now defunct Banzai Institute website that said "What did Frank Darabont have to do with the BB TV show?" This was the answer:

Let's just say that MGM was sufficiently impressed with the sales of the BB DVD (plus the Pocket Books reprint of the novelization) that more than one party has expressed an interest in doing a television version of the good Doctor's adventures. Which one will ultimately make it to the production stage is still anyone's guess, although we expect interest in such projects to become even greater as the new novel approaches publication."

When Richter was asked today if he or Rauch were contacted or consulted for the Frank Darabont Banzai pilot, his answer was short and to the point: "No."

TV Attempt the Fifth (2011)

We skip ahead nine years to the fifth attempt which, in a change of pace, involved the concept of an adult animated Buckaroo Banzai TV show being discussed.

Rick was quoted on the [Giant Freaking Robot website](#) in 2011 saying that, "Warner Bros. wants to do an adult animated version of 'Buckaroo.'"

When discussing this animated concept with Rick today, there isn't too much more information to report. Rick said that an executive at WB Animation at the time named Sam Register was a big Buckaroo Banzai fan and wanted to create an adult animated series with Rick and Mac. Sam is now the president of Warner Bros. Animation and Warner Digital Series but at the time he was WBA's Executive Vice President of Creative Affairs. Rick said that there was a conversation and a few emails, but not much happened beyond discussing the initial concept. Why? The rights issues reared their ugly head and killed the project before it could even really get started.

TV Attempt the Sixth – The final attempt so far (2016)

The sixth attempt to bring Buckaroo to the small screen began on May 16th, 2016 when filmmaker Kevin Smith announced on his [Hollywood Babble On podcast](#) that he was working on a Buckaroo Banzai TV series with MGM. That same day an article on [uproxx.com](#) mentioned that MGM executives had asked if he had any thoughts on how to turn Buckaroo Banzai into a TV show. Smith said, "Basically you just do the entire movie for season one, then season two you finally do the sequel we've all dreamed about, Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League."

On June 10th, Smith [Tweeted](#) that he and MGM TV pitched the Banzai TV show and attracted "3 serious suitors."

On July 29th, 2016, Smith expanded on his plans for the show on the [Super Hero Hype website](#):

"With 'Buckaroo Banzai' we get to tell the whole movie in ten episodes, so you get to expand some things" Smith told us. "We're gonna take a lot of stuff from Earl Mac Rauch's brilliant novelization book of 'Buckaroo Banzai' that included Hanoi Xan, his arch nemesis, who we want Peter Weller to play. We'll layer that in, but also moments like... In 'Buckaroo Banzai' they're all standing around talking about when the aliens came during the night of the 'War of the Worlds' broadcast. It's people trading information, saying it out loud. We're gonna do a whole episode about that night and them approaching Orson Welles and all that. Moments where you're like, 'Wow, that's a cool concept' you get to expand and play with a little bit."

While all of this was going on with Kevin Smith, Rick and Mac were not involved in the TV show process and decided to go back to look at their original contracts one more time to see who owned the characters and world of Buckaroo Banzai. After discussions with a lawyer, Rick and Mac were convinced that, although Sherwood Productions bought the rights to make the Buckaroo Banzai film, that was only one script from the world of Buckaroo Banzai and, therefore, MGM did not own the rights to tell any further Banzai stories. Rick did an interview with Rich Drees at the [Film Buff website](#) that was published on October 4th, 2016 and discussed all of these issues.

On November 28th, 2016 the [Hollywood Reporter](#) published a story discussing the fact that MGM had filed a complaint in California federal court against Rick and Mac. That same day Kevin Smith posted a [Facebook live video](#) where he discussed

the fact that he is "no longer involved" with the proposed Banzai TV series at Amazon. The legal action was news to Smith who stated, "This lawsuit comes from MGM legal - it doesn't come from any of the people I met at MGM." When discussing Rick and Mac, Smith said, "Without those two dudes, I don't fall in love with that property. I don't want to make anything unless those two dudes are involved. They had the vision. Like, all we're doing is taking their amazing vision and making a TV show of it." Smith continued later in the video to say, "I don't wish anybody harm; I wish all parties well. I hope these dudes come to an agreement, and if they do and they still want me involved down the road, I'll be here. But why would they?"

On March 17th, 2017, the [Hollywood Reporter](#) published an article stating that Rick and Mac claimed MGM had infringed copyright by shopping around the Buckaroo Banzai TV Series.

This sequence of legal events, based on the messy rights issues that have plagued Buckaroo Banzai since the beginning, have put the TV show project at MGM in limbo. There have been no additional attempts to bring Buckaroo to the small screen.

COMICS



Buckaroo Banzai movie adaptation (Marvel) - 1984

Buckaroo Banzai was a two issue limited series comic book adaptation of the film produced by Marvel comics. Issue #1 bears a cover date of December, 1984 and issue #2 is dated February, 1985.

The two issues were collected under a single cover as Marvel Super Special #33 with a cover date of November 1, 1984. The Super Special version included an additional 16 page segment entitled "An Interview with the Director of BUCKAROO BANZAI, W.D. Richter" by James Burns and illustrated with numerous still images from the film.

Return of the Screw et al. (Story continuation, Moonstone Books) - 2006-2012

The attempt to bring Buckaroo Banzai back to comic was a success as multiple issues were released. Of all the attempts to continue the Buckaroo Banzai property, comic books are the only avenue that's been successful as of this writing.

In May, 2006 [Moonstone Books](#) published the first of three issues of a Buckaroo Banzai comic book called [Return of the Screw](#). This story was from the 1999 draft of the [Buckaroo Banzai : Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries](#) pilot script

(discussed earlier) called “Supersize those Fries” written by Earl Mac Rauch and adapted for comics by Joe Gentile. The original script was formatted to accommodate the layout needed for a comic book, i.e. breaking up the story and action into three parts for three issues. The only exception to this is when, in the third revision of the comic book script, the ending was changed from the one scripted for TV. The revised ending doesn’t change the story much and mostly serves to modify things from “to be continued” to “so ends another adventure.”

New stories and comic book issues were released:

A Christmas Corral (2007)
The Prequel - Of Human Bondage (2008)
Origins - A Tomb with a View (2009)
Big Size - Wild Asses of the Kush (2009)
The Love that Hath No Name (2010)
Hardest of the Hard (2010)
Comic: Tears of a Clone (2012)
Comic: Buckaroo Banzai: Mysterium (2012)

Unpublished Comic Book Issues?

It turns out that not all of Rauch’s comic scripts were made into comic books. According to Joe Gentile, “I have tried to get a third Buckaroo Banzai TPB [Paperback Graphics novel] released. I have a bunch of unpublished Mac comic scripts with illustrations...but they [Rick and Mac] are not interested in seeing Mac’s work in such a form. Perhaps, if we can get some BB fan support to have that 3rd TPB printed, that might convince them.”

Joe elaborated, “I think, 4 or 5 comic scripts never saw print. We would have a bunch of original color illustrations to go along with them. So most of this book would be new material. The format of “illustrated comic script” is a little unusual, but for BB, I think it really works. In addition to those new stories, the TPB would also reprint the last 2 BB comics we did that have not been in a TPB yet.”

NOVELS

Buckaroo Banzai by Earl Mac Rauch (1984)

The Buckaroo Banzai novel was written by Earl Mac Rauch and published in August, 1984. To call this book a novelization of the film is a bit of a misnomer as the story expands upon a lot more ground than what’s found in the film.

Reprint and new novels on the horizon: (1998-2002)

Rick Richter posted the following information to the web on December 11, 1998 about the reprint of the original Buckaroo Banzai novel and new future novels. “And look to Simon & Schuster in the not-too-distant future (their Pocket Books division) for a new series of Buckaroo novels that Mac Rauch will be adapting from the secret journals of that hard rockin’ Hong Kong Cavalier, Mister Reno Nevada.” There was a two year gap between this announcement and the actual publication of the original novel on December 4th, 2001. Sadly, no additional novels were released.

The original plan was to write four novels forming a “Lizardo Quartet” of Banzai adventures. The proposed book titles were:

- 1) Buckaroo Banzai: Across the Eighth Dimension
- 2) The Exterminating Buddhist
- 3) Close, but no Cigar
- 4) Bastardy Proves A Spur

When asked about the Lizardo Quartet today, Earl Mac Rauch had the following to say:

“About the novels that never were, there was really only one. Back in 2001-2002, Simon & Schuster kind of came out of nowhere with a proposal for a series of Buckaroo novels, as you note. This was nearly 20 years after Buckaroo the Movie and I thought, ‘Great. Exciting. A chance to resurrect Buckaroo?’ So I sent them a couple of pages, laying out a very vague notion of a Buckaroo trilogy, but it was all off the top of my head and nothing I had put much thought into.

It’s all a little blurry now, but my life during that period was pretty turbulent—I’d just spent 6 months in cancer treatment at Cedars in 2001--and I ended up taking a fairly long time with the first draft. Maybe it was ‘cancer brain’, but I’m not an outliner in any case, and it usually takes me an initial draft to figure out where I want to go. In other words, the fun of the thing doesn’t usually begin for me until the rewriting when I can use the rough draft as an outline. I always assume (rightly or wrongly) I’ll get there in the end, but in this case sometime after the first deadline had passed, Simon & Schuster was getting antsy to receive something, so I sent my very sketchy rough draft, which didn’t exactly whet their appetite for more...so they decided to cut their losses and cancel the deal. In other words, things never got very far--a lost opportunity I regret. With another draft or two I think I could have turned in something interesting, but a contract is a contract, and I have no right to bitch, especially since I took an advance and gave them what amounted to nothing. The moral of the story: outlining is your friend and can save you a lot of grief and missed deadlines. I’m just not very good at it.”

Sadly, the initial draft of the Buckaroo Banzai novel is owned by Simon & Schuster and unlikely ever to be released.

Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League By Earl Mac Rauch (2019)

What’s this? A new Buckaroo Banzai novel on the horizon? Rauch explains:

“Moving forward, I’m putting the final polish on a Buckaroo novel (*Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League*) that Dark Horse is bringing out later this year. Mike Richardson’s been really supportive, and I think the novel’s a lot of fun. If nothing else, it’s indecently long and can be used as a paperweight or a door stop.”

An indecently long *Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League* sequel novel? Count. Me. In. 

Rejected Television Pitches

By DeWayne Todd

One of the toughest challenges of the Banzai Institute is fielding proposals for adaptations of Buckaroo's adventures or stories about specific Blue Blaze Irregulars. Over the years, there has been a constant barrage of pitches for movies or serialized stories by Hollywood and Television, mostly focused on sensationalizing (and monetizing) the good works of Buckaroo and his inner circle.

The television proposals hit a peak when the Richter/Rauch docudrama was in development, a project that was sanctioned by Buckaroo himself, based on the high level of respect and professionalism that the creative team brought to the dramatization of the Team's first interdimensional excursion. Hoping to capitalize on the potential success of the motion picture, nearly every television studio pitched wildly creative projects which were promptly rejected. Many of these projects would eventually become popular eighties television shows but their origins were quite different...

The B-Team – This series proposed to tell a series of action and adventure stories about the now famous group of ex-Team Banzai members that was wrongly exorcised from the Banzai Institute for allegedly supporting anti-American forces in Asia. (Subsequent investigations by Rawhide and Perfect Tommy revealed that these members were covertly fighting Hanoi Xan's forces). Despite the expulsion, these men remained loyal to the ideals of Buckaroo and the Team went underground, posing as soldiers for hire but actually serving the greater good.

This pitch for an opening monologue remains in the Institute archives: "In 1972, a crack Blue Blaze Strike Team was sent to prison by a military court for a crime they didn't commit. These men promptly escaped from a maximum-security stockade to the Los Angeles underground. Today, still pursued by Team Banzai and the U.S. government, they survive as soldiers of fortune. If you have a problem... if no one else can help... and if you can find them... maybe you can hire... The B-Team." Astute viewers of eighties television might recognize that the introduction was later adopted for an alternative fictional show.

Kanpai! – This proposal sought to capitalize on the humorous side of the Institute by giving audiences a look at how Team Banzai spends its downtime. Set at Kanpai*, the Banzai Bunkhouse bar in Grover's Mill, New Jersey, the show would focus on the important social aspects of where the Team meets to drink, relax, chat, and have fun. Developers even went so far as to contract a catchy theme song, written and performed by

"I love it when Plan B comes together."
– John "Hannibal" Smith

Billy Vera with the refrain, "No matter where you go, everybody knows your name."

It is rumored that Ted Danson had become so enamored with the project that when it was rejected, he spent three days in a local bar before he realized he didn't need the name Banzai to make a successful show.

Sydney Zwibel, M.D. – Much has been made of the brilliant mind that is Sydney Zwibel, an old companion of Buckaroo's from medical school. One proposal focused on Sydney's awkwardly humorous curiosity and renowned dance skills. ABC pitched a show portraying Sydney's years as a medical student, where he dealt with the challenges of being young, curious and extremely bright. The show was rejected by the Institute because of repeated reliance on the young doctor asking, "What's that ... (fill in the blank)... doing there?" Years later, the idea was revised to spotlight a younger protagonist and brilliant young physician (named Doogie) that faced the problems of both the medical profession and being a normal teenager.

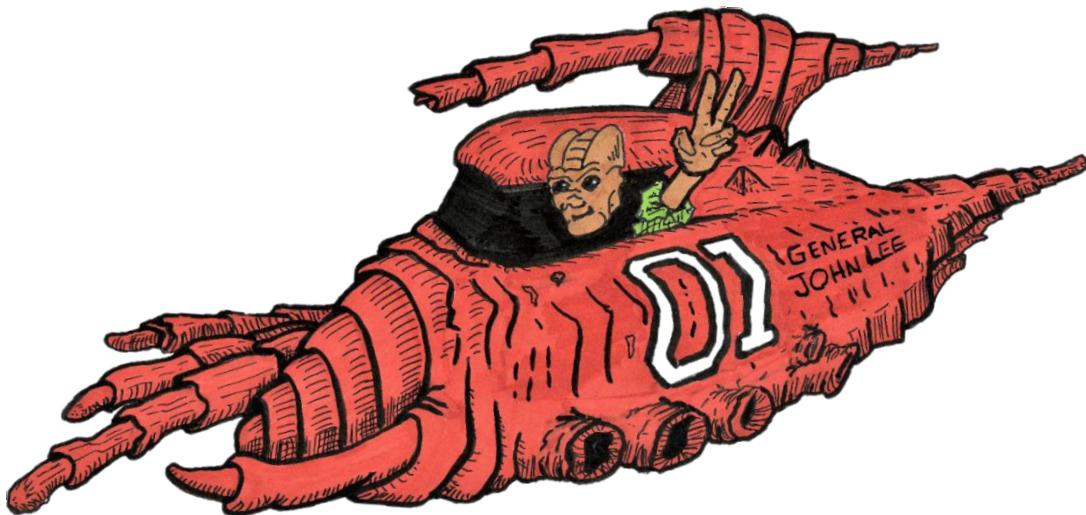
The Johns of Hazzard County – One thing Hollywood is famous for is the evolution of story concepts. One example of how convoluted this process can get was an idea that initially focused on two members of the Nova Police stationed on Earth, in New York City—watching for threats and smugglers from Outer Space and the Eighth Dimension. The series was pitched to relate real stories from the "naked jungle" where the Nova Police keep the Earth safe from criminals and Red Lectroids.

Buckaroo rejected the idea for obvious reasons. Panic would surely result if the knowledge of Lectroids living among us in positions of authority was made available to the general public. Going back to the drawing board, the network recast the story to focus on 'fictional' Lectroids living in rural Georgia who fight against rednecks who smuggle moonshine and Twinkies to Planet 10 through the Eighth Dimension. Obviously, Buckaroo put the kibosh on that idea too.

In a last ditch effort, producers tried to sell a completely fictional story of two Lectroid brothers (John Bo and John Luke) living with their cousin, John Daisy and their wise old Uncle John Jesse in a rural part of the fictional Hazzard County, Georgia where a naturally occurring portal into the Eighth Dimension exists. The John boys are constantly jumping between the backwoods of Georgia and the Eighth Dimension in a customized thermopod known as (The) General John Lee as they thwart the plans of crooked members of the Nova Police (Boss John Hog) and his inept Lectroid sidekick (John Rosco P. Coltrane.)

How this evolved from the initial idea is bewildering, but by this time, the Institute realized that no one would ever buy into the premise of "good old boys" living in the woods, constantly thwarting the plans of the corrupt local police.

* Kanpai roughly translates as "Cheers."



Bosom Blue Blazers – Positions at the Banzai Institute are coveted by people across the world, but the number of active positions is very limited, and the Institute tries to maintain a diverse mix of interns. In a now famous incident, when the institute was attempting to attract more women to the ranks, two single men disguised themselves as women in order to get open spots in the ‘all female’ section of the Bunkhouse. Desperate for ideas, the studios even attempted to sell a show based upon the idea of men pretending to be female researchers.

Although rejected, a young Tom Hanks, who had been very eager to become a cross-dressing Blue Blaze Irregular, took the idea and refined it into what would become a popular television series.

“Perfect” Tommy MacGuyver – A little known fact was that before Perfect Tommy joined the Institute and acquired the title of “Perfect”, he went by Tommy MacGuyver and was a secret agent for the U.S. Government. This series would have explored Tommy’s pre-Team Banzai adventures. It was developed with the premise that when he was a younger man, before becoming enamored with Strike Teams, Tommy preferred non-violent resolutions to problems and even refused to handle a gun. Because of his encyclopedic knowledge of science and mathematics, Tommy MacGyver earned world renown for his ability to solve complex problems with the “perfect” mixture of everyday materials, duct tape, and his fashionable “Swiss Army Knife.” In fact, it was Tommy’s reputation for peaceful solutions that drew him to Buckaroo’s attention, and the rest is history.

It is rumored that Perfect Tommy, disappointed that the Institute refused to grant the rights to this show, slipped the scripts to Richard Dean Anderson who promptly sold the show

to CBS. Although uncredited, Tommy often worked as a consultant to the show on particularly complex problems over the life of the series.

Eighth Dimension Leap – Although it was an incredible breakthrough on planet Earth, the reality is that Lectroids have been travelling in and out of the Eighth Dimension for nearly a century. Although mostly perfected by the nineteen eighties, the early years could be very dangerous and fraught with uncertainty. Such was the case for the Black Lectroid explorer, John Beckett, a physicist from Planet Ten. Through an incredible conflux of events, John Beckett became stuck in a quantum dimensional loop during his initial attempts to access the Eighth Dimension. Trapped in a loop where he was constantly being shunted from place to place and even time to time by way of the Eighth Dimension, John was constantly manifesting in various situations that studio producers thought would make an incredible series. While constantly trying to maneuver back to Planet Ten, John would often help those he encountered, seeking to “put right what once went wrong. Always hoping that the next jump through the interdimensional barrier will be the leap home, to Planet Ten.”

Once again, the realization that Lectroids had been altering history for nearly a century was deemed too radical for mid-eighties audiences and the show was discarded as a dangerous dissemination of events best kept from public knowledge.

Interestingly, the Institute did suggest that by changing the underlying premise a bit, the show could potentially introduce the idea of quantum leaping to audiences in the context of fiction; preparing them for the revelation of truths that would ultimately alter the very fabric of reality.



The Complete “Historical” Hanoi Shan

By Steve Mattsson

Harry Ashton-Wolfe (1881-1959) was an interpreter at the British Civil and Criminal Courts and assistant to Dr. Bertillion in Paris, or so he says. Ashton-Wolfe was also the chronicler of the historical Hanoi Shan’s nefarious crimes. We have written in detail about Ashton-Wolfe’s Hanoi Shan in previous issues of *World Watch One*. You can find them archived at the [World Watch On-Line library](#).

So far we have only been able to speculate about the connection between Hanoi Shan and Buckaroo Banzai’s nemesis Hanoi Xan. In this issue of World Watch One we hear from Reno of Memphis on the subject. For Rauch’s two cents, see the interview with him next issue.

For Reno’s take, we have been granted permission to print this excerpt from a secret Banzai Institute document written by Reno himself: “And yet, owing to Xan’s vast fortune and the best newspapers and politicians that money can buy, the popular masses remain largely ignorant of the torture master’s crimes. Even his name is unfamiliar to the man in the street, save as a master villain in certain fictional works, viz. the ‘true crime’ stories by the putative ‘Harry Ashton-Wolfe.’ (The question of whether Xan himself wrote as Ashton-Wolfe is a fascinating one that has not been settled to my satisfaction; perhaps a dedicated reader with access to the British Museum might wish to explore the subject further.)”

Before any Blue Blaze Irregulars in the tri-state area heed Reno’s call and head to the British Museum, do your homework first. Here is a comprehensive reading list of the historical Hanoi Shan literature.

Warped in the Making: Crimes of Love and Hate

By H. Ashton-Wolfe—Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York 1927

Contains the stories; “The Suicide Room: Hanoi Shan” and “The Scented Death: Hanoi Shan.”

The Thrill of Evil

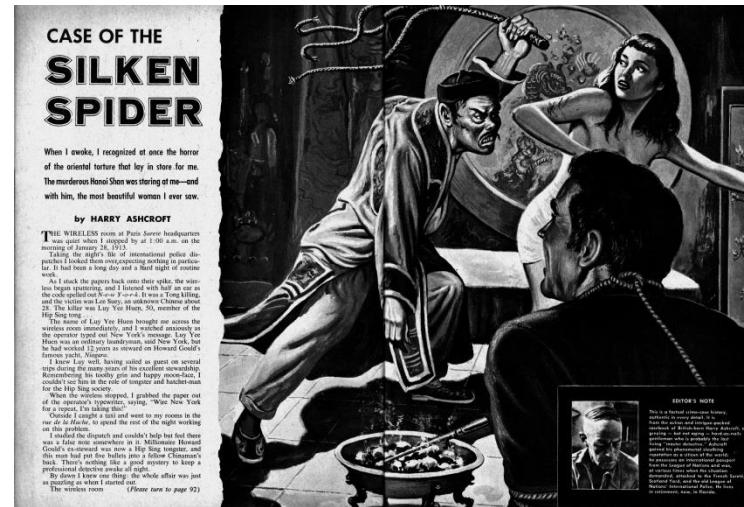
By H. Ashton-Wolfe—Hurst & Blackett, Limited, London 1928

Contains the stories; “Kiki: A Tale of Hanoi Shan, the Spider” and “Chang Foo Lee”*

Man’s Illustrated Vol. 4 No. 5

Edited by Jack Hoffman—Hanro Corporation, New York 1958

Contains the story “Case of the Silken Spider” by Harry Ashcroft.



Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life

By Philip José Farmer—Doubleday, New York 1973

Contains the Addendum “The Fabulous Family Tree of Doc Savage (Another Excursion into Creative Mythography).” Farmer speculates that Hanoi Shan may have been a real-life model for Sax Rohmer’s Fu Manchu.

Criminal Masterminds

By Rick Lai—Altus Press, Boston 2009

Contains the article “The Legacy of Hanoi Shan.” Lai recaps Ashton-Wolfe’s Hanoi Shan stories, discusses other literary villains inspired by Shan, like Sebury Quinn’s Dr. Sun Ah Poy, and finally he refutes Farmer’s speculation that Hanoi Shan and Fu Manchu are the same evil mastermind.

Tales of the Shadowmen: The Vampires of Paris

Edited by Jean-Marc & Randy Lofficier—Black Coat Press, Encino, California 2009

Contains the story “The Jade Buddha” by David L. Vineyard which features Hanoi Shan vs. Arsène Lupin.

The Crimes of Hanoi Shan

Edited by Rick Lai—The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, Eugenia, Ontario 2013

Reprints the stories from “Warped in the Making” and “The Thrill of Evil” and contains the stories; “The Return of Hanoi Shan,” “The Mystery of the Stolen Portraits,” and “The Whirling Madness,” all written by Ashton-Wolfe and reprinted from *American Weekly* magazine.

Links have been provided for all texts still in print and available for purchase. Warped in the Making: Crimes of Love and Hate, The Thrill of Evil, and Man’s Illustrated Vol. 4 No. 5 are all out-of-print, but you’re in luck. There’s this thing on the internet called “eBay.”

*Note: the American edition of The Thrill of Evil 1930 does not contain the story “Chang Foo Lee.”

What's On Your Nightstand?

By DeWayne Todd

A recent audit of the Institute's extensive library discovered an inordinate number of books missing from the collection. Never one to point fingers, it is presumed that these missing books were likely removed by team members that forgot to use the standardized check-out procedure.

When the Boss learned of the missing volumes, he ordered several interns to do an immediate and unannounced audit of what team members had in their bunkhouse bedrooms. Here is the compiled list, without commentary on which books were properly checked out and which were not.

Buckaroo Banzai

Penny Dreadfuls: Sensational Tales of Terror,
Dziemianowicz, Hoffman, E.T.A. (2015).

How to Die and Survive: The Interdimensional Travel Manual, Browne-Miller, Angela (1997).

Strange Fish, Robeson, Kenneth (1945).

Perfect Tommy

The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing,
Durham, Marilyn (1972).

Case Closed: Grounds for Murder, Aoyama, Gosho (2016).

New Jersey

In Watermelon Sugar, Brautigan, Richard (1958).

Great Expectations, Dickens, Charles (1861).

Professor Hikita

The Wheel of Time: The Gathering Storm,
Jordan, Robert and Sanderson, Brandon (2009).

Mrs. Johnson

The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping,
Hill, Jennie (2011).

The Night is Alive, Graham, Heather (2013).

Rawhide

"Dig Me No Grave," Howard, Robert E.,
Weird Tales (1937).

Living To Tell the Tale, Garcia Marquez, Gabriel (2003).

Reno

We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live,
Didion, Joan (2006).

Scooter Lindley

Trouble is My Business, Chandler, Raymond (1939).

Pecos

Seven Years in Tibet, Harrer, Heinrich (1954).

JOHN LOVESTOREAD

**Pinky Carruthers**

Billy Vera: Harlem to Hollywood, Vera, Billy (2017).

"Kings of the Night," Howard, Robert E.,
Weird Tales (1930).

Penny Priddy

Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds, MacKay, Charles (1841).

One Piece: Don't Get Fooled Again, Oda, Eiichiro (2008).

The Past Through Tomorrow, Heinlein, Robert A. (1967).

Billy Travers

Fluke: The Maths and Myths of Coincidences,
Mazur, Joseph (2016).

Jack Burton (visiting Associate)

The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins, Twain, Mark (1894).

Bob Dylan, Nobel Laureate (visiting Associate)

"Black Wind Blowing," Howard, Robert E.,
Weird Tales (1936).

A Wild Buckaroo Banzai Film Score Appears! Comparing the Bootleg Soundtrack to the Isolated Film Score

By Dan Berger and Sean Murphy

The matter of an official soundtrack to *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension!* has been an ongoing concern at *World Watch One* for several years now. Articles on the topic appeared in our [September 2018](#) and [October 2016](#), issues, but fan interest in Michael Boddicker's soundtrack stretches all the way back to 1984. So does fan disappointment in the continued lack of an official release.

For thirty-five years the best that fans could expect from a soundtrack were cover versions of the themes performed by [Neil Norman and his Cosmic Orchestra](#) and a bootleg soundtrack containing at least some music and related tracks from the film score. While we still don't have an official release, we were recently given a unique opportunity to validate the music found on the bootleg against the film's original score.

In February 2019 a Blue Blaze Irregular provided *World Watch One* with MP3 files containing the isolated film score to *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* taken from a Hi-Fi VHS copy of the film. This is an amazing discovery! The Hi-Fi VHS tape had the music on the left channel and the dialogue and sound effects split onto the right channel. This means that the audio tracks contain all of the music from the film without any dialog or sound effects on top of them, making these files a unique listening experience. For the purposes of this article, we'll refer to the Hi-Fi VHS version as the isolated film score.

In order to validate the isolated film score as authentic, we listened to the MP3 files and compared them to the Blu-ray of the film. The two sources are, in fact, the same. We then listened to the Buckaroo Banzai Limited Edition Gold CD Bootleg Soundtrack to compare it to the isolated film score and discovered that a lot of the music on the bootleg is not actually from the film, as we'll discuss later.

The Isolated Film Score

The isolated film score consists of thirty-six tracks worth of themes, incidental music (such as the concert music from



Synth Master General: Michael Boddicker nestled in the analogue splendor of his synthesizers in the early 1980s.



Artie's Artery), and music cues, presented in the same order as the music is found in the film, with a total running time of forty-five minutes.

We adopted some of the track titles from the bootleg and applied them wherever they converged with the isolated film score, in order to map out the similarities between the two sources. In all other cases we created names for the cues based on what was happening on screen when the music began in the film. The bolded tracks below appear in both sources.

1. Opening Theme	1:02
2. Flames: Stand Back	1:01
3. Buckaroo Arrives	0:47
4. Buckaroo Inspects The Jet Car	0:21
5. Goo On The Windscreen	0:09
6. Looking Under The Jet Car	0:15
7. Buckaroo Finds A Hitchhiker	0:17
8. Banzai Jam (Buckaroo Banzai And The Hong Kong Cavaliers)	1:34
9. Since I Don't Have You	1:15
10. Country Western Music	1:11
11. Penny In The Jail Cell	0:58
12. Red Lectroids From Planet 10	2:02
13. Thermopod from a tree	1:31
14. Escape from the hunters	0:37
15. Buckaroo Finds The Thermopod	0:45
16. Scooter Gets The Message	0:28
17. Scooter Tells His Dad	1:31
18. Buckaroo Escapes	1:23
19. New Jersey Plays Piano	0:17
20. War Of The Worlds/Lectroids Arrive	1:16
21. After John Emdall's Message	0:39
22. Penny Learns About Peggy	0:57
23. Searching For Hikita	3:04
24. The President Reacts/Buckaroo's Speech On The Bus	1:23

25. Buckaroo Drives Into Yoyodyne	3:30
26. Baby Mobile For Lectroids	2:00
27. Nobody Cumz In Here	0:39
28. Secretary Finds The Overthruster	2:48
29. Ship Crashes Through Wall	1:14
30. Thermopod Flies Like A Truck	1:52
31. Buckaroo Parachutes	1:07
32. Team Banzai Theme	0:54
33. Penny Is Dead?	0:44
34. Penny Is Alive	1:14
35. End Credits - Long Version	3:05*
36. End Credits - Long Version part 2	1:06*

*Tracks 35 and 36 above should really be combined into one track, which is the complete Banzai March and end credits music from the film. They appear as a single track on the bootleg soundtrack as Track 19 - *End Credits (Long Version)*.

Some of the music cues found on the isolated film score are split over several scenes in the actual film but are combined into single tracks for a more concise listening experience. Some of the tracks are very short, just fifteen, seventeen, or twenty-one seconds long. These shorter cues are tension/mood setting/creepy background music. Examples includes the cues when Buckaroo is inspecting the jet car after going through the mountain (*Buckaroo Inspects The Jet Car*), or sudden musical 'hits' to accent something happening on screen, such as when Buckaroo discovers the creature beneath the jet car (*Buckaroo Finds A Hitchhiker*).

Hearing the film's music without the dialogue or sound effects is initially a very strange experience. We hadn't realized how much we expected to hear Artie announce the band, or Perfect Tommy saying "Let's Rock and Roll!" as part of the musical experience until it was gone. Without these distractions we were really able to focus on the music itself, not everything else going on in the film.

We quickly discovered how often the Banzai theme music is repeated throughout the film. This included the epic sounding version of the Banzai theme when Buckaroo first appears to get in the jet car (*Buckaroo Arrives*); the excited driving beat when Buckaroo is saved by the helicopter (*Buckaroo Escapes*); or how the theme is performed slowly when New Jersey is playing the piano that helps Rawhide discover the use of the g-cypher (*New Jersey Plays Piano*).

The real revelation was discovering music that we hadn't noticed before, like the country and western music that plays when New Jersey meets the band at the court house (*Country Western Music*). While we clearly hear this music in the film we didn't realize that it continues to play for one minute and eleven seconds in the background. Another new discovery was the twenty-eight seconds of rocking music that plays at a low volume behind Scooter when he gets the radio message that Buckaroo needs help (*Scooter Gets the Message*).

It's very easy to see why Boddicker, or any film score composer, wouldn't just release the film score as it is found in the film.

The music is sometimes cut off suddenly when a scene ends or, as noted earlier, there are short pieces of music that may not stand on their own outside of the film. It makes sense for a composer to work on the music in order to make a film score album that flows better musically, is more coherent, and contains longer music cues that were cut for the film. It is entirely possible that longer versions of some of these cues lurk in Boddicker's archive.

The Buckaroo Banzai Limited Edition Gold CD Bootleg Soundtrack

On the first part of the [Five Minutes of Banzai podcast](#) interview with Michael Boddicker in 2018, he discussed the bootleg soundtrack and the music found on it. He said, "People took my demo cassettes that have nothing to do [with Buckaroo Banzai]. There's Honda commercials and all this other stuff [on the bootleg]. And they've released it. And sold it for 25 bucks as a Buckaroo Banzai soundtrack. They're stealing music of mine and selling it to people but it's not the [Buckaroo Banzai] music the people think they're buying."

The isolated film score affords us the unique opportunity to determine which music on the bootleg is actually in the film and which of the other tracks are potentially Boddicker's demo reel, the Honda commercials, and other stuff.

The bootleg soundtrack contains some music and dialogue from the film and runs 38 minutes. The music cues and dialogue tracks found on the bootleg soundtrack are not in the order that they are found in the actual film.

1. Opening Theme	1:21
2. Penny Is Alive	1:18
3. Red Lectroids From Planet 10	2:04
4. Penny's Theme	0:31
5. "No Matter Where You Go..." (Dialogue)	0:13
6. "Laugh While You Can..." (Dialogue)	0:04
7. They're Getting Away!	0:41
8. Nobudy Cumz In Here	1:30
9. You Can't Hide That	0:32
10. Motorcycle Chase	2:24
11. Buckaroo's Speech (Dialogue)	0:32
12. Turbo Pod On Our Tail	1:31
13. Team Banzai Theme	0:50
14. End Credits (Short Version)	2:21
15. Opening Theme Reprise	1:08
16. "Where Are We Going..." (Dialogue)	0:07
17. "It's Not My Planet..." (Dialogue)	0:05
18. The 8 th Dimension	13:31
19. End Credits (Long Version)	4:14
20. President On Line One (Dialogue)	0:20
21. Banzai Jam (Buckaroo Banzai And The Hong Kong Cavaliers)	2:11

The first thing we did was compare the lengths of the musically identical tracks on both the isolated film score and the bootleg soundtrack. Although there are minor time differences between the shared tracks, these occur because of additional dialogue,

sound effects, or dead air at the end and beginning of some tracks on the bootleg. In addition, track 10 - *Motorcycle Chase* on the bootleg soundtrack appears to be a demo or extended cut of the music heard while Buckaroo chases the Lectroids on motorbike in the isolated film score track. This song also appears several years later on the 1987 album *Joyride* as track 5, *Reprise*, credited to Boddicker and sporting additional guitar tracks for a little extra rock and roll punch.

Our goal was to determine how much music found on the Bootleg was actually in the film. We eliminated the six tracks of dialogue from the film. These account for one minute and twenty seconds of the 38 minute running time.

5. "No Matter Where You Go..." (Dialogue)	0:13
6. "Laugh While You Can..." (Dialogue)	0:04
11. Buckaroo's Speech (Dialogue)	0:32
16. "Where Are We Going..." (Dialogue)	0:07
17. "It's Not My Planet..." (Dialogue)	0:05
20. President On Line One (Dialogue)	0:20

We next discovered that the following four tracks do not appear in the film in any readily detectable form:

4. Penny's Theme	0:31
9. You Can't Hide That	0:32
12. Turbo Pod On Our Tail	1:31
18. The 8 th Dimension	13:31

The shorter music tracks (*Penny's Theme*, *You Can't Hide That*, *Turbo Pod On Our Tail*) may be from the Honda commercials or "other stuff" Boddicker mentioned on the podcast. The track called *The 8th Dimension* is most likely from his demo reel as it is a single long-form piece of music that flows from one section to another and shows a range of different musical themes and textures. These ten tracks account for sixteen minutes and five seconds of the 38 minute running time.

What this tells us is that the bootleg soundtrack is only really comprised of eleven tracks of music from the film.

1. Opening Theme	1:21
2. Penny Is Alive	1:18
3. Red Lectroids From Planet 10	2:04
7. They're Getting Away!	0:41
8. Nobudy Cumz In Here	1:30
10. Motorcycle Chase	2:24
13 Team Banzai Theme	0:50
14. End Credits (Short Version)	2:21
15. Opening Theme Reprise	1:08
19. End Credits (Long Version)	4:14
21. Banzai Jam (Buckaroo Banzai And The Hong Kong Cavaliers)	2:11

These eleven tracks run for 21 minutes and 55 seconds. But hold onto your hats as this gets a little crazier. The *Opening Theme* and *Opening Theme Reprise* are the same music and the *End Credits (Short Version)* appears to be either an alternate mix, demo version, or early version of the "Banzai March" music found in the *End Credits (Long Version)*. If we remove the two

shorter tracks, that's 3 minutes and 29 seconds. That reduces the amount of actual music from film on the bootleg soundtrack to just 18 minutes and 26 seconds.

After we apply a little bit of math we quickly discover that there are 26 minutes and 34 seconds more music on the isolated film score than found on the bootleg soundtrack. Boddicker was absolutely correct when he said that the music on the bootleg soundtrack is "not the [Buckaroo Banzai] music the people think they're buying."

Ironically, the bootleg soundtrack is a much more accessible and listenable collection of music than the isolated film score. The commercial music and demo tracks in the bootleg may not be from the film, but they are very much "of a piece" with the music from the film in terms of the textures and compositional stamp that Boddicker as an artist brings to his body of work. We were shocked on a couple of tracks to discover that music in the bootleg that we thought appeared in the film did not, in fact, surface in the isolated film score at all.

That said, the deficiencies of the bootleg's sound quality and questionable track inclusions are all the more reason to release an official soundtrack to the film. After thirty-five years, is that likely to happen?

An Official Release?

On the second part of his [Five Minutes of Banzai Podcast](#) interview, Michael Boddicker discussed the possibility of an official release when asked What can Buckaroo Banzai fans do to help get an official release of the soundtrack out there?

"I've actually been thinking about that," said Boddicker, "I could probably be motivated to do that in the next year to year and a half...next spring would be the 35 year anniversary [August, 2019]...I would love to do a new Buckaroo Banzai release. I'd love to release the soundtrack. I'd love to release the extras."

When he mentioned the 35th anniversary time frame, he tied it to a synth event he'd just created and was getting off the ground at the time of the podcast. "I have an event, a large event that's coming up in March of next year, 2019...This would be a really great place for a bunch of Buckaroo Banzai people. I could make that the jumping off place for some of this music...We could very easily do a Buckaroo Banzai showing and do some talks about that...[The event is] called SynthPlex, by the way. [Synthplex.com](#)."

We truly hope that there will be some kind of announcement about an official Buckaroo Banzai film score soundtrack release at Michael Boddicker's [SynthPlex](#) event, which is happening from March 28th thru 31st, 2019. 



Team Banzai

Events Calendar

Please note all dates, locations, and other details may be subject to change. Be sure to visit the links for updates and more info.

APRIL

TABB Cast Birthdays: Ellen Barkin (April 16), Laura Harrington (April 29)

Geologists Day (April 7). Geologists rock! First recognized by the U.S.S.R. in 1966, the first Sunday in April is set aside in several nations to honor the scientific contributions of these gneiss people, and that's no schist.

National Cinnamon Bun Day (April 10). Mrs. Johnson's famous cinnamon buns are always in demand around the Bunkhouse, but never more so than today. One per individual.

Record Store Day (April 13). A tradition now more than a decade strong and international in scope. One Saturday every April (and often unofficially again around Black Friday in November), vinyl aficionados, musicians, and record labels come together to celebrate local independent record stores, not merely as a sales point but to acknowledge their communal passion and expertise.

54th Annual Freer Rattlesnake Roundup (April 26-28 in Freer, TX). Try your hand at catching the critters or just enjoy the ambiance of lariat tricks, country western and Tejano music, carnival games, and fried rattler meat. Prize money for categories such as the longest rattler and the most nonvenomous snakes captured by one individual. Alternately, read a counter-perspective [here](#).

MAY

TABB Cast Birthdays: Raye Birk (May 27), Billy Vera (May 28)

Physics symposia in Europe: 6th Annual World Congress on Physics (May 13-14, Paris). This year's theme: "Unveiling the endless possibilities of nature with physics and its allied concepts."

Also the **6th International Conference on Theoretical and Applied Physics** (May 16-

17, Rome). This year's theme: "Evolution of Interdisciplinarity in Physics Research."

Lantern Floating Festival (May 27 in O'ahu, Hawaii). Share in the beauty of over 7,000 glowing lights being released onto the waters, honoring loved ones in the Shinnyoen tradition. Individual lanterns will be provided upon request while they last, or you can submit a name to be included on one of several Collective Remembrance Lanterns.

Denver Pop Culture Con (May 31-June 2 in Denver, CO). A large family-friendly con appealing to diverse fandoms across all media. Among this year's scheduled guests is TABB's Christopher Lloyd.

JUNE

TABB Cast Birthdays: Jessie Lawrence Ferguson (June 3), Peter Weller (June 24)

Secret City Festival (June 7-8 in Oak Ridge, TN). History and atomic science intersect with music, food, and fun. Tour sites that were once among the most classified in America during the Manhattan Project era, view large-scale WWII reenactments and displays of vintage military gear, take in a concert, attend an arts and crafts fair, all nestled in the natural beauty of the nearby Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains. Lots of free kid-friendly activities.

16th Annual Avon Heritage Duck Tape Festival (June 13-15 in Avon, OH). Avon is headquarters of Duck brand duct tape, and every year the townsfolk demonstrate their ingenuity by using the versatile product to craft everything from full-size parade floats to an entire fashion show.

World Toe Wrestling Championships (June 22 in Fenny Bentley near Ashbourne in Derbyshire, England). Read an informative look at the sport [here](#) and a profile of the reigning champ [here](#).

Batalia de Vino, the Wine Battle (June 29 in Haro, Spain). Dancing in the streets starts the night before, and by morning it's a free-for-all where wine is loaded into super-soakers, buckets, and any other viable dispenser. Everyone is fair game.

JULY

TABB Cast Birthdays: Robert Ito (July 2), Pepe Serna (July 23) Dan Hedaya (July 24)

Roswell UFO Festival (July 5-7, Roswell, NM). There's something here for everyone, whether you're after serious research and personal testimonies, collectible space-themed vintage toys, or just want to watch the nighttime parade or participate in the 5K Alien Chase. Explore the International UFO Museum and Research Center, the local planetarium, or the famous alleged crash site itself.

Underwater Music Festival (July 6-7). Head to Looe Key Reef in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to witness this unique celebration. Underwater speakers pipe aquatic-themed music below the surface, where costumed "musicians" pantomime playing along on specially sculpted instruments created by local artist August Powers. The altered sound quality of the music as transmitted through water instead of air adds a memorable touch. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

The Mooning of the Amtrak (July 13, Laguna Niguel, CA). Every year on the second Saturday in July, cheeky folks gather at the Mugs Away Saloon and await the passing train to give it a special greeting. Supposedly the tradition stems from a 1979 incident when one man offered to buy a round of drinks for any of his friends who did so... but does the reason really matter?

Comic-Con International (July 18-21, San Diego, CA). Guests and programming TBA.

EARLY AUGUST

TABB Cast Birthdays: Lewis Smith (Aug. 1), Kevin Sullivan (Aug. 3), Carl Lumbly (Aug. 14)

National Watermelon Day (Aug. 3). Why is there a watermelon there?

Humungous Fungus Fest (Crystal Falls, MI; 2019 dates TBA). Behold one of the world's oldest and largest living organisms, an *Armillaria gallica* mushroom network which [new research](#) estimates as weighing 440 tons and perhaps 2,500 years old. Crystal Falls celebrates its venerable neighbor each year with talent shows, parades, live music, foraging tours, and foodie events such as mushroom cook-offs and the world's largest mushroom pizza.

1 Pos Same
size



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